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# THE DOCUMENTS

IN THE CASE OF

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## JAMES RICHARDS.

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NEW HAVEN:  
TUTTLE, MOREHOUSE & TAYLOR,  
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## CONTENTS.

INTRODUCTION,.....	pp. 3—4
Object of the pamphlet. The points claimed in defense of Dr. Richards. The defamations practised against other parties.	
THE CASE OF DR. RICHARDS PREVIOUS TO HIS APPEARANCE BEFORE THE LITCHFIELD SOUTH ASSOCIATION,.....	pp. 5—9
Action of the <i>Litchfield North Association</i> , June 17th, 1858. Letter of <i>Dr. Richards</i> to Rev. L. W. Bacon, and answer. Correspondence with the <i>Sated Clerk of the Presbytery of New Orleans</i> . Further Letters to <i>Dr. Richards</i> . Contingent Action of the <i>Litchfield South Association</i> , June 7th, 1859.	
DR. RICHARDS BEFORE THE ASSOCIATION,.....	pp. 9—13
<i>Memorial of Dr. Richards</i> to the Association, presented Aug. 16th, 1859. His <i>Oral Statement</i> . Action of the Association.	
CORRESPONDENCE OF THE COMMITTEE OF INQUIRY,.....	pp. 13—29
With Rev. <i>Dr. Palmer</i> , New Orleans; Rev. <i>Mr. Perrin</i> , New Britain; Rev. <i>Dr. Butler</i> , Port Gibson, Miss.; <i>H. W. Taylor</i> , Esq., Canandaigua, N. Y.; <i>Geo. Starr</i> , Esq., Warren; Rev. <i>Dr. Magie</i> , Elizabethtown, N. J.; <i>H. J. Taylor</i> , Esq., Warren; <i>I. D. Patterson</i> , Esq., New Preston; Rev. <i>Dr. Hickok</i> , Schenectady, N. Y.; Rev. <i>Dr. Cheever</i> , New York; <i>Frederick Stringer</i> , Esq., and <i>Wm. C. Raymond</i> , Esq., New Orleans; Rev. <i>Dr. Mills</i> , Auburn, N. Y.; Rev. <i>Mr. Cuyler</i> , New York; Rev. <i>Mr. English</i> , (Stated Clerk of the Presbytery of Elizabethtown,) Liberty Corner, N. J.; <i>Thos. Beale</i> , Esq., Canandaigua, N. Y.; Rev. <i>Dr. Daggett</i> , Canandaigua, N. Y.; <i>Dr. Chas. B. White</i> , New Orleans; Rev. <i>Dr. Thompson</i> , Buffalo; Rev. <i>Mr. English</i> , (Stated Clerk, &c.) Liberty Corner, N. J.	
DR. RICHARDS'S WITHDRAWAL OF HIS PETITION TO THE ASSOCIATION, AND PRESENTATION OF A MEMORIAL TO THE PRESBYTERY OF NEW ORLEANS,.....	pp. 30—32
Correspondence between <i>Dr. Richards</i> and Members of the Association.	
REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE OF INQUIRY; and ACTION OF THE ASSOCIATION, Sept. 27th, 1859,.....	pp. 32—35
DR. RICHARDS BEFORE THE PRESBYTERY OF NEW ORLEANS,.....	pp. 35—37
Action of the Presbytery, Oct. 1859. Also, a copy of the <i>Charge and Specifications</i> under which <i>Dr. Richards</i> was convicted, Jan. 1856.	
CONFERENCE OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE ASSOCIATION WITH LEADING MEN IN THE CHURCH AT NORTHFIELD,.....	pp. 38—41
Correspondence with Deacon <i>John Cullen</i> .	
FINAL PUBLIC ACTION OF THE ASSOCIATION, Dec. 6th, 1859,.....	pp. 42—44

## APPENDIX.

I. DR. RICHARDS'S DEFENSE,.....	pp. 1—3
Anonymous Article in the <i>Winsted Herald</i> .	
II. DR. RICHARDS AT NEW ORLEANS,.....	pp. 3—9
Articles from the <i>N. O. Crescent</i> :—	
1. Arrest of <i>Dr. Richards</i> for Drunkenness. March 3, 1855.	
2. "Additional" March 5, 1855.	
3. <i>Dr. Richards's</i> Apology. March 13, 1855.	
4. Final Exposure and Disgrace of <i>Dr. Richards</i> before the Public of New Orleans. May 17, 1855.	
Article from the <i>Yazoo Whig</i> , March 30, 1855.—A Lady's comments on <i>Dr. Richards's</i> Apology.	
III. DR. RICHARDS'S PLEA OF INSANITY,.....	pp. 9—10
IV. DR. RICHARDS'S PLEA OF RECENT IRREPROACHABLE CHARACTER,.....	p. 10
V. JURISDICTION OF THE ASSOCIATION,.....	pp. 10—12

# INTRODUCTION.

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THE occasion for printing these documents is as follows.

In the course of the year 1859, it became necessary for the Litchfield South Association of Pastors, in the fulfilment of their public duties,\* to inquire into the standing and character of JAMES RICHARDS, and finally to expose him as an impostor.

This exposure of him having been published, it was claimed in his defense:†

1. That the charges of Falsehood, Fraud, Violence, Drunkenness and other crimes, which had been laid against him since he had been in the Christian ministry, either by common fame, or by the allegations of responsible men, or by the finding of the ecclesiastical courts by which he had been successively tried and condemned—were false charges.

2. That if the things charged had been committed, it had been during periods of insanity, in which he was relieved from all responsibility for his actions, or in fits of unconsciousness, from which he emerged with no knowledge or memory of his acts during the continuance of them.

3. That whether or not he had been guilty of these things in his past life, he had lived irreproachably since he had come to Litchfield, and had given satisfactory evidence of contrition, penitence, and reformation of life.

All which claims are denied, and the contrary of them is ready to be proved, whenever Dr. Richards shall call for the proof before any competent tribunal.

But the main resource in the defense of Dr. Richards, has lain in the *defamation* of other parties, viz.:

1. In defaming the members of the Presbytery of New Orleans that had excommunicated him, as being themselves men of scandalous lives.

2. In defaming the Litchfield South Association, who (to protect the public against imposture) had given public notice of his excommunication and the cause of it, of his falsehood in their presence, and of his general bad character for veracity,—by accusing them of "conspiracy;" of "raking up old charges against him," that had no pertinence to the question of his present character; of "making to order," the charge of falsehood; of inveigling him by false pretenses into coming before them

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\* See Appendix, No. V, "*Jurisdiction of the Association.*"

† See page 1 of Appendix, "*Dr. Richards's Defense.*"

as a candidate for the ministry; of intermeddling with a matter in which they had no concern; and in general, of malicious persecution.

3. In defaming, in particular, a member of the Association, Mr. L. W. Bacon, by imputing to him personally the various charges preferred against the Association; and by alleging that he had sought to harass a man who was "trying to reform," with persistent attacks in the newspapers, and had sought to gratify his malignity or vindictiveness, under the pretense of public duty.

4. In defaming his own former wife.

These falsehoods are still industriously circulated; they are repeated, explicitly and by innuendo, privately and in public meetings, and there are, even outside of the Northfield parish, persons claiming respectability, who affect to believe them, and to have confidence in the character of Dr. Richards from whom they chiefly originate. For this reason *the documents in the case* are submitted, in the most natural order of arrangement, and with only so much of comment as may make them intelligible. These being read there will be no occasion for argument.

The documents are not printed for sale, nor for general circulation. No further publicity is sought for them than has been, or may yet be, necessitated by the injurious conduct of the person to whom they chiefly relate.

LEONARD W. BACON.

Litchfield, Conn., September, 1860.

P. S.—Some weeks have now elapsed since the above was written, and the documents transcribed in the following order. They were read by judicious friends of the subscriber, including gentlemen of the highest eminence in the legal profession, who concurred in recommending that they should be printed. Since then, any scruple about printing them has been removed by Dr. Richards's own act. He has commenced a suit at law, the trial of which would compel the production of them before the public; so that the printing only anticipates "the law's delay." Thanks, however, are due for the cheerful removal of the injunction of privacy, from such part of the correspondence herein contained, as was properly subject to the disposal of the writers.

One thing more. The correspondence of the Committee of Inquiry has been in a few instances abridged by the omission of *irrelevant*, or *merely formal* matter. The omissions are always indicated by asterisks, and *never* include anything that could help the defense of Dr. Richards.

L. W. B.

New Haven, October, 1860.



# LETTERS AND OTHER DOCUMENTS.

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## Action of the Litchfield North Association, June 17th, 1858.

[Dr. Richards came to Litchfield in the year 1856, and announced himself, in the advertisements of his school and elsewhere, with the title of "Reverend." He thus obtained admission to sundry pulpits where his character and antecedents were not known. Some of the facts regarding him having been discovered by members of the Litchfield North Association, (within whose bounds most of these ministrations had been performed,) the following action was taken at their annual meeting, June 17th, 1858.]

*Whereas*, This Association has learned that the pulpits of some churches within our bounds have been opened to one who, we are credibly informed, is under ecclesiastical censure; therefore,

*Resolved*, That as an Association, we protest, for the purity of the ministry and the benefit of the churches, against the employment of any individuals as preachers of the Gospel who cannot give satisfactory proof of their good standing in the ministry.

*Voted*, That the above minute be published in the *N. Y. Independent, Evangelist, and Observer*, and also in the *Religious Herald* of Hartford.

## Letter of Dr. Richards to Rev. L. W. Bacon.

[Being excluded from the pulpits of the northern half of the county, Dr. Richards did not refrain from accepting invitations to preach in pulpits within the bounds of the Litchfield South Association, —invitations which had been extended to him under the belief that he was of good character and standing. These infractions of good order were the occasion of much regret to such of the neighboring ministers as had heard any thing of Dr. Richards's antecedents; and when it appeared at last that he was preaching regularly in a parish to which he had been ignorantly invited, the member of the Litchfield South Association living nearest to Dr. Richards (Rev. L. W. Bacon,) called on him, April 6th, 1858, to remonstrate with him. At this interview, Dr. Richards declared that he had no idea that the pastors were taking offense at his course, that he had not been aware that the action of the Litchfield North Association during the previous year was intended to apply to him, and that he would not repeat the offense a single Sunday;—that he would write down to the church at Northfield at once, declining to serve them in future. He added that he had never had any official or authentic information that he had been deposed from the ministry: he gave as his reason for not asking to be restored to the ministry by a regular process, that his health was such that he could not bear the agitation of an inquiry into the story of his past troubles.]

In reply he was assured that it was unnecessary for him to act towards the church at Northfield with any appearance of abruptness:—that no offense would be taken at his gradually and quietly withdrawing himself from ministrations among them:—that with regard to his alleged deposition by the Presbytery of New Orleans, it was desirable on all accounts to have authentic information, and that a letter would be despatched to the Stated Clerk of that Presbytery, asking for the facts. His resolution to discontinue the exercise of the ministry until restored to its fellows ip was warmly commended.

In the evening of the same day, Mr. Bacon received from Dr. Richards the following letter:]

Elm Park, April 5th, 1859.

REV. L. W. BACON, My Dear Sir:

I have been pondering seriously and prayerfully the subject matter of our conversation this morning, and I must say that I do not feel *entirely clear* as to *the course* to be pursued.

In view of *all* the circumstances of the case, it seems to me that I *ought not hastily to commit myself to any definite course* in relation to my *public and official* duties. *More reflection on my part and earnest prayer* to God as well as *consultation* with friends who have *favoured me with their confidence*, and who are deeply interested in my welfare and usefulness as a teacher and a preacher, *must be had* before I can decide on the precise steps to be taken to relieve ministerial brethren from the embarrassment which you named. (See Gospel John, 2d: 24th, 25th.)

I had indulged the hope that I was soon to reap the *peaceable fruits of my lot* and bitter trials—but if I am to taste yet *more* of the *wormwood* and the *gall*, as be subjected to still *greater "perils"* than those through which I have already passed—*God's will be done*.

That the great Head of the Church may guide and bless you in all your effort to do good and extend the honor of his name, is the sincere prayer of one who humbly hopes that he is a member of Christ's mystical body, and who now as ever subscribes himself truly yours,

JAMES RICHARDS.

Tuesday evening.

Answer.

Litchfield, Tuesday evening, April 5th.

REV. DR. RICHARDS, Dear Sir:

Your note (which arrived a few moments since,) I at first intended to answer person; but it seems to me that I can express myself more satisfactorily in writing

I am not at all surprised that you hesitate in the decision of so important question as this which has arisen. I assure you that I sympathize in the struggle of mind which it must doubtless cost you. It seems to me that your mistake lies in *acting* in the matter *before* it is decided. The thing which I think must make an unfavorable impression upon such minds as are already prejudiced against you, that while you hesitate to ask the approbation of the pastors, you should have hesitation at all about the far more momentous matter of preaching. I am not surprised that a bad report (however unjust) among "them that are without" should have been deemed by you a sufficient reason for refraining, for a time, from being a *member* of a church: I only wonder that it did not seem even a strong reason for not entering, for a time, upon the position of a *minister*. I. Tim., iii, seems explicit on this point.

Excuse the roughness of my sentences, I only want to get my meaning out fairly

But my object in communicating with you on this subject has been, not volunteer advice with regard to *your duty*,—I should not have alluded to that but for your very frank invitation,—but simply that you might be advised of what I conceive to be *mine* and that of my brethren in the pastoral office. That duty I conceive to be threefold.

1. *To the churches*. Some rule is necessary to save the churches from ignorant and unworthy impostors in the pulpit. Among Baptists and (I believe) English Independents the rule requires an examination before the church of which the candidate is a member, and a certificate of their approbation. Here the rule is different; but it is *the rule* nevertheless, and it is indispensable to good order. I all know you to be an able and learned man; but if we examine no man except the suspicion that he is a blockhead, we shall examine nobody at all. My impression is perfectly clear and satisfactory of your soundness in the faith; but if we on the strength of an *impression*, suffer you to preach as if by our approbation, yet without any credentials, we throw away the only safe-guard of the church against novices and heretics. The Northfield church would have a right to complain that the pastors had been treacherous to their confidence, if we should be *unfaithful in this matter*.

2. We have a duty to you. If any brother becomes the subject of an evil report, which follows him to annoy him, and to circumscribe his usefulness, obviously the very first duty and service which we can render him is to inquire into the matter, and to vindicate him by declaring his innocence. I do not see but that this is exactly your case and ours. If your case is perfectly clear and satisfactory, all the more easy for examination; if it is any wise difficult or embarrassed, all the greater necessity for an examination. If there is no difficulty about satisfying the pastors, why not do it? If there is difficulty about it, why is it not all the more important to do it?

The very important consideration which you mentioned this afternoon, that of your health, and the importance of avoiding needless excitement, is open to the same sort of answer. The same considerations of health which should lead you to avoid an informal conference with the neighboring pastors, ought to forbid you to undergo the weekly excitement and fatigue, at the close of your week's laborious duties, of supplying a pulpit. A providential call to do the latter of these must seem to be a providential call to do the other first.

I cannot but sympathize with you in the thought of your protracted trials, to which you so feelingly allude. But it is impossible for me to think it a hardship that you should not be permitted to over-ride all the laws and discipline of our churches, or that you should not be admitted to the confidence of the associated ministers and churches while offering no opportunity to them to satisfy the doubts of any of their number, touching your character and standing.

3. We owe a duty to ourselves. For all these irregularities we are justly held responsible, and to all the reproach of flying rumors unfavourable to you, and which are not brought to investigation and set at rest, we are justly obnoxious, so long as you occupy this position with our tacit consent. We are so fixed that we can neither deny the charges, nor disclaim the responsibility. Such responsibility as this I do not think we have any right to assume; nor does it seem just that you should impose it on us, for even a single week.

As I have said, I assume no authority whatever. You are independent; the Northfield church is independent, except so far as it may have bound itself by compact. Just so, however, all the pastors and churches of this district are independent. And there is no difficulty in devising action which shall rectify the irregularity complained of, without in the slightest degree trenching on the independence of church or individual.

If the relations of parties should continue as at present, I should think it my duty to bring the subject to the notice of the Association at the earliest opportunity.

I close abruptly, for it is long after midnight. But I am happy to know that I have had too many opportunities to show my personal and neighborly good will, to make it needful for me to disclaim any motive for the above resolution but such as appear on the face of the letter. Truly yours,

L. W. BACON.

**Rev. L. W. Bacon, to the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery of New Orleans.**

*Litchfield, Conn., April 6th, 1859.*

Rev. and dear Sir:

Will you have the kindness to send me a statement of the ecclesiastical standing of Dr. James Richards, formerly pastor of a church in your presbytery.

In case any censure exist against him, if there are also any circumstances that may mitigate the moral effect of the censure, or if you have any knowledge of a disposition among the members of the presbytery to reverse or alleviate the sentence in view of facts which have since transpired, I should esteem it a favor to be advised of them. I write simply by my own authority, but your answer will be a kindness not only to me, but to the churches of our common Lord in this region, into whose pulpits Dr. Richards desires to be admitted.

Wishing to you, and to the church under your charge, the blessing of grace, mercy and peace, I am yours fraternally,

LEONARD W. BACON.

**Answer.***New Orleans, April 19, 1859.***REV. L. BACON, Dear Sir:**

Your letter asking information about the ecclesiastical status of Dr. Richards has just come to hand. Much to my regret I am unable to afford any information that can give you pleasure. What follows is an extract from the Records of Presbytery, page 51.

The Committee appointed to prepare a minute in the judicial case of Common Fame vs. James Richards, made the following report:

*Whereas*, Rev. James Richards, D. D., has been charged by Common Fame with the crime of drunkenness, and this Presbytery after a full investigation has found the general charge to be sustained, specifications 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, wholly; and specifications 4 and 7 in part; and *whereas*, in the judgment of this Presbytery the aggravations of the offense, as proven, require that the defendant should be solemnly deposed from the gospel ministry; and that the sentence of deposition should include excommunication, therefore,

*Resolved*, that the said Rev. James Richards, D. D., be, and hereby is, deposed from the gospel ministry and excommunicated from the Church.

The roll being called, the report of the Committee was unanimously adopted. After some remarks by the moderator respecting the solemn business in which we have been engaged, Presbytery engaged in prayer.

*Resolved*, that the Stated Clerk be instructed to forward a copy of this minute to Dr. Richards.—[*Minutes of Jan. 22d. 1856.*]

In answer to your question as to the possible removal of this existing censure,—I have no doubt that Presbytery would willingly listen to any considerations that would justify such action. Nevertheless, the events connected with this judicial case, are so painfully fresh in the minds of many of the community, that I should think it injudicious in the friends of Dr. Richards to ask Presbytery to reconsider its action at present.

If I can be of any service to you and the friends of Dr. Richards in further connection with this matter, believe me that it would afford me great pleasure.

Very respectfully, yours in Christ,

HENRY M. SMITH.

*Stated Clerk of the Presbytery of N. O.*

[A copy of the above letter was inclosed to Dr. Richards, and the note accompanying it concluded as follows:—]

"As I have said before, I mean to keep a mind as clear from prejudice as possible on the merits of the main question. But let me urge it again on your consideration, how much a frank invitation of inquiry would do to relieve existing prejudice, and how much a course which cannot but seem an evasion of inquiry must needs aggravate it.

Yours Truly,

L. W. BACON.

[As the time of the annual meeting of the Litchfield South Association approached, the following letter was sent to Dr. Richards.]

**Rev. L. W. Bacon to Dr. James Richards.**

*Litchfield, June 4th, 1859.*

**REV. DR. RICHARDS, Dear Sir:**

The Consociation of "Litchfield South" (including the Association) is to meet next Tuesday (7th inst.) at Plymouth. I mention this in order that you may be prepared (if you should think best) to forestall any action of the Association on the subject on which we have exchanged letters, by yourself presenting to the body some

communication which should make it unnecessary for them to act. I should be happy to be the bearer of any such communication, or if you should desire to address yourself to the Association in person, I have no hesitation in saying that you would be heard.

I deprecate the necessity of action by the Association *proprio motu*. Decisive and effective action would involve the substantial republication of the doings of the New Orleans Presbytery, and this would not only be an effectual guard of the pulpits of our churches, and the good name of our ministry, but might have other results, affecting yourself, which none of the brethren would desire, and least of all,

Sincerely your Friend,

L. W. BACON.

[In the above mentioned proceedings, Mr. Bacon acted at the suggestion, or with the approbation, of the neighboring clergymen.]

### Action of the Litchfield South Association, June 7th, 1859.

At the annual meeting of the Litchfield South Association at Plymouth, June 7th, 1859, Messrs. Bacon, Lyman, Isham, Lawrence and Prudden, were "appointed a committee to report what action, if any, ought to be taken with respect to the irregular assumption of ministerial character and duties within the limits of this Association, by an unauthorized person."

This committee recommended the following action, which was adopted:

"Whereas, It has come to the knowledge of this Association that James Richards has irregularly assumed to performed the functions of a minister in regular standing among the churches within our limits;

"Voted, That a committee of three be appointed to confer with Dr. Richards respecting his irregular ministrations, and to obtain from him, if possible, some guarantee that he will abstain from further violation of the order of the churches; and that in the event of their failing to obtain any such guarantee, they have authority to warn the churches in the name of the Association concerning his irregularity, by the publication of the following letter."

[The letter contained a declaration of the standing of Dr. Richards, and a warning to the churches against all infractors of good order, and evaders of the safeguards of the ministry. It was not published, in consideration of the wish of Dr. Richards to submit his case to examination by the Association. To consider his request, a special meeting was called at Litchfield.]

### Memorial of Dr. Richards to the Litchfield South Association.

[The following paper was presented to the Association at a meeting convened at Litchfield Aug. 16th, 1859, "to hear and act upon the application of Mr. James Richards of Litchfield to be examined as a candidate for the ministry."]

DEAR BRETHREN,

Between three and four years have elapsed since I took up my residence among you. I came here with enfeebled health and under the censure of one of the lower judicatories of the Old School Presbyterian Church. The justness of that censure, humiliating and afflictive as it was, I do not controvert, further than to say that under circumstances far more painful and trying, I was *fully and honorably* acquitted of any *moral delinquency or obliquity* by the *Presbytery of Elizabethtown* and by the *Synod of New Jersey*, and by both bodies commended to the *sympathy and confidence* of the Presbyterian church.

That the judicatory under whose sentence I am now resting, acted consistently with their *impression* of duty, I have no reason to doubt. Since their action in my case, accident and disease have borne the greater part of the Presbytery to a world of retribution, and such as were prepared, to a world of rest. But one pastor out of those known by me to have participated in that judicial inquiry remains. A new generation of ministers and people have arisen in that *focal point* of all that is noxious, deadly and debasing in the U. States.

I will not, as I have said, controvert the justness of their sentence. They acted I am willing to believe, consistently with their sense of duty. Nevertheless I feel justified in the eye of God, by my own conscience, and by the consciences and wishes of those who best knew me, in a total disregard of the censure,—and the more so as I had formally withdrawn from the Presbyterian church before any process was instituted against me, and when by my own act, they were relieved from all responsibility for my future course. My disregard, however, of their action has placed me beyond the circle of their sympathies, and I cannot look to them with any hope of success for a redress of my grievances, or a removal of those obstacles to my usefulness created by their judicial action. I must turn to you, dear brethren, for sympathy and effective relief in my peculiarly trying and embarrassing circumstances. I have confidence in your christian benevolence, and in your love of justice. I deeply regret all those instances in which I have seemed to bid defiance to your rules of ecclesiastical order. Never to my recollection, have I officiated as a minister of religion within your bounds, without a special invitation from the resident pastor or Committee of Supply; nor even then, without distinctly avowing my unfortunate position as a minister under censure of a Southern Presbytery. I am pained to think that my course in this, or in any other respect has been the occasion of grief to my brethren in the Lord, for nothing could be further from my wish or purpose. Respect for the ministerial character and office is intertwined with every fiber of my heart, and I would have accounted it the greatest privilege the God of mercy could bestow upon me this side of heaven, to have been in fellowship with you, and to have received the counsels and the care of my father and brethren of this Association. This favor I now ask at your hands. So far as I know my own heart, the prominent desire which prompts me to make this application is that I may have an unembarrassed opportunity of doing good, of heralding my Master's name and grace to my dying fellow-men,—of convincing the world that by the boundless grace of God I am a humble and conscientious and self-sacrificing minister of the Gospel, and I trust through the constantly exerted grace of the Redeemer nothing shall be wanting in my conduct decisively to evince the sentiments I have now expressed.

My health is now so far restored, as with safety to admit of my occupying pulpit on the Sabbath, in addition to my routine of duties through the week in the school room. I find the change of labor on the Sabbath most agreeable; but anything is still needed to give permanency to my bodily health and tranquillity to my mind, I verily believe that a favorable reception of my application, followed by your cordial recognition of me as a brother in Christ, and a minister of his church, will contribute more than anything else to a result so beneficial and desirable.

In this petition, you will observe that I have carefully refrained from all allusion to my relationship with an honored but now departed servant of God, the fragrance of whose good name is even now diffused throughout the Christian Church, and one who never occupied a station which he did not adorn. Nor have I made mention of my own ministry of twenty years, in fields of varied prominence and usefulness; seven of which was passed with one church, and twelve of which without as much as the illness of a single sabbath. I am anxious that my brethren of the Association, independently of my antecedents of any sort, should take up the case as they find it, in the spirit of meekness and charity, in the temper of disciples, the Prince of peace, with a large supply of that spirit which prompted the exclamation, "*who is weak and I am not weak? who is offended and I burn not?*"

And now, dear Brethren, I have only to add that in our best intentions we are liable to error. We may be deceived both in our actions, and in the motives for which they spring. And if at any time since I have been amongst you, I have been left to be actuated by improper feelings, or if under the dominion of good feelings I have been left to improper conduct, I hope to have the fortitude to confess it, the principle to mourn for it, the virtue to repent of it, the Christian magnanimity to make any reparation in my power to the injured, the church of God and the world.

I hope you will interrogate me freely on any points whereupon *the minds of* *as of you labor*, and give me an opportunity of clearing up every thing to your satisfaction so far as I am able to do so. If you wish me to fortify my position and strengthen your own favorable [ ] of me by documentary evidence, I shall furnish it

Some of the neighboring churches have volunteered their service in this behalf, as well as private members and personal friends in this place, from whom you shall hear at the fitting time and place.

I am, Fathers and Brethren, yours with respect and affection,

Your afflicted brother,

JAMES RICHARDS.

[Dr. Richards then, on invitation, appeared before the Association, and made a statement of his personal history.]

### Oral Statement of Dr. Richards.

He spoke of his religious experiences in childhood and early youth. He said that he was brought to repentance and conversion at Canandaigua, under the ministry of Rev. Dr. Eddy: that he became a teacher in the Sunday School, and by and by a student of theology in the Seminary at Auburn, but that he did not unite with the church until two years after entering the Seminary. He gave the details of his religious experience at some length.

At the close of his studies, he was called to the Presbyterian Church in Aurora, N. Y., where his preaching was so successful that the two churches in the village, Presbyterian and Episcopalian, became united in one under his ministry. At Aurora he remained two years.

Thence he went to Penn Yan, N. Y., where he remained seven years. During this period, he suffered at intervals with great depression of spirits, and with doubts touching his own salvation. When he left the church, it was increased by a hundred members. During his ministry there, he lost his [first] wife by death. At the close of it he declined several calls to different churches, and finally accepted a call to his father's old church in Morristown, N. J. There were circumstances connected with a prospective marriage, which had to do with the termination of his ministry at Penn Yan.

While pastor at Morristown he was taken sick and in consequence of aberration of mind was taken to the Insane Retreat, where, in answer to the prayers of his church, he was restored to health. Returning to his charge, he had a constant morbid feeling of being suspected and pointed at, which wrought on him and affected his health; he twice tendered his resignation to the church, which was declined. Finally distressed and exhausted in health, he insisted on his resignation, acting by the advice of Rev. Dr. Magie and other friends,—and the resignation was accepted.

After his dismissal from the pastorate at Morristown, he visited New Orleans, and on his return to Morristown, found circumstances which led him to demand a judicial inquiry. The charges which were preferred against him in this process before the Presbytery of Elizabethtown, were Intemperance; Falsehood (in declaring the first charge to be false;) and Profane Swearing (which took place on the cars on the way to the Insane Retreat.) The investigation lasted a long time; and the result was "modified criminality," and he was enjoined to demit the exercise of the ministry for a while, on account of his health. This result was made subject to Protest. He submitted to it, but it was carried up to the Synod, where the case was "taken up on the record," and the lower Judicatory overruled. All the while that this matter was pending, he was supplying the pulpit of Dr. Cheever's church, and other pulpits.

After this he received sundry calls; among others, to Memphis and Little Rock. Meeting with Dr. Zebulon Butler of Port Gibson, Miss., he went to that place and spent a year and a half in the college there. While there, he received and accepted a call to the Third Presbyterian Church in New Orleans. He had previously received and declined a call to the Second Presbyterian Church in the same city, a fact which he believed to have given rise to jealousy and hostility toward him.

In his charge at New Orleans his ministry was prosperous, until the difficulty arose which resulted in his deposition. That difficulty was as follows:

In order to prosecute an application for divorce which had been commenced in the State of Mississippi, he had retained a legal "residence" within the boundaries of that State, although not far from the city of New Orleans. One day he had

been engaged all day at this residence, with his lawyers, and returned to the city fatigued and exhausted. He became unconscious, and was brought to the Recorder's office in a state of insensibility. This was the first of March, 1855. He was recognized by documents in his pockets. The thing got into the newspapers in the most unfavorable form. He was mortified and entirely unmanned. He remained in the city only three weeks, during which time he received many letters of sympathy, and an invitation to preach at Galveston. He resigned his church, and before any charges were preferred against him, requested a dismission from the Presbytery. The story was investigated by the "Sons of Temperance" of which he was chaplain, and he was acquitted. He does not know that he had taken any thing intoxicating. He was not in the habit of using anything intoxicating. He would sometimes take a glass of claret at the table of a brother minister,—if it was wrong he was sorry for it; but to all intents and purposes, during his residence at New Orleans, he was a total abstinence man.

He now left New Orleans on a visit to England, and while in London, became convinced of the principles of Congregationalism, and wrote to the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery requesting them to drop his name from their roll. The Presbytery took up the matter, cited him to appear, notwithstanding his withdrawal from them, and suspended him from the ministry. He asked counsel of Dr. Cheever and others, and was advised to disregard the censure of the Presbytery. All this time he held fast his integrity; he was maintaining habitual prayer; he loved the doctrines of the gospel.

He is now pleasantly situated, and enjoying good health of body and mind.

Nearly a year after he came to Litchfield, he was preaching at Warren. During one week he was unusually burdened and fatigued. Saturday, he lay down and tried to sleep. In the afternoon he started for Warren in a buggy, with a large bottle of *camphor* in his traveling bag;—became bewildered, lost the road, and arrived at Mr. Comstock's late at night. He assisted at family prayers, went to bed, but was sleepless at night. In the morning he went to church; in reading the second hymn, had a thickening of the utterance, and was obliged to desist. He went home, and was sick.

He believes himself now to be in good health, and able to be useful. He has long wanted to have the approbation and commendation of the Association, but has been hindered from seeking it by considerations of health. He wishes that he had acted in an orderly manner, with respect to resuming the ministry. He has no disposition to be disorderly.

*Question by a member of the Association.*—You have said that you withdrew from the Presbytery before charges had been made against you. Did you withdraw before you *expected* that charges would be tabled?

*Ans.* There, brethren, I must acknowledge that you press me too hard. I did expect that they would bring charges against me.

*Qu.* Dr. Richards, you have given a satisfactory explanation of a *single instance* of alleged drunkenness. But it appears by the letter of the Clerk of the Presbytery of New Orleans that *seven* specifications were tabled against you, five of which were held to be fully sustained, and two of them in part. Now were there any other instances of *apparent* intoxication which might have given occasion to these accusations?

*Ans.* None whatever.

*Qu.* What then do you suppose these other six specifications to refer to?

*Ans.* Before God my final Judge, I cannot tell.

*Qu.* At any time since you became a minister, have you ever been guilty of any gross and scandalous outward sin?

*Ans.* Never in any conscious moment.

*Qu.* There has been a good deal said, since your residence among us, with regard to your financial dealings. Has there been any thing in these that you now consider to be wrong?

*Ans.* When I came here to establish myself, I was without capital, and at my time of life could not afford to wait for it, so that I was compelled to go a good deal on the "high-pressure" system. In this way I contracted a good many obligations which I was unable to meet when due. But I hope now to be able to fulfil them all.

*Qu.* You have stated that in every instance in which you have officiated as



minister since you have been among us, you have distinctly avowed that you were not in regular standing in the ministry. To whom did you state this in Goshen?

*Ans.* To Brother Perrin. He came to Litchfield to invite me to preach for him. I told him that I was a speckled bird, and that he must take me as I was. He still urged his invitation.

*Qu.* Whom did you tell of this at New Preston?

*Ans.* Mr. Patterson.

*Qu.* Whom did you tell at Warren?

*Ans.* Mr. Taylor, a member of the Society's Committee.

*Qu.* Whom did you tell at Wolcottville?

*Ans.* There I took it for granted that the people knew the facts.

*Qu.* What did you say on the subject to the Rev. Mr. Clark, of Cornwall, when you proposed an exchange with him from Wolcottville?

*Ans.* I said nothing to him.

*Qu.* Whom did you inform of your standing at Northfield?

*Ans.* The third or fourth Sunday of my preaching there, Mr. Peck reported to me a remark of Geo. D. Wadhams, Esq., of Wolcottville, to the effect that I was not an authorized minister of the Gospel, and asked me whether it was true? I acknowledged that it was.

*Qu.* Was this at the time of your giving notice of the proposed administration of the Lord's Supper?

*Ans.* It was.

[The above oral statement and examination has been written out from notes taken at the time, and from memory, and is substantially, although not in all cases verbally, correct.]

### **Action of the Association, Aug. 16th, 1859.**

*Whereas*, Mr. James Richards, D. D., has requested this Association to take his case under examination with a view if the Association think proper, to license him to preach the Gospel,

*Voted*, To defer final action upon the question of his license to preach the gospel until the next session of the Association, when, if nothing adverse shall appear to forbid, he shall receive the license in question.

*Voted*, That Brothers Bacon, Lyman and Churchill, be a committee to make such inquiries as will enable the Association to reach a just conclusion, and report at the next meeting.

The Association then adjourned to meet at the same place, on the 27th of September, 1859.

## **CORRESPONDENCE OF THE COMMITTEE OF INQUIRY.**

### **To Rev. Dr. Palmer, New Orleans.**

[The following letter was written (as appears by the date,) before the meeting at which the Committee of Inquiry was appointed; but the answer did not arrive until after that meeting, and was laid before the Committee, and referred to in their Report.]

*Litchfield, Conn., Aug. 3d, 1859.*

REV. DR. PALMER, Dear Sir:

In a matter in which I need the counsel of some wise Christian minister in New Orleans, my friend Mr. Chas. H. Lloyd, has recommended me to address you; and has assured me that you would render me any service which should at the same time be a service to our common Master and his Church. Having this sort of introduction to you, which I hope will commend me, although unknown, to your confidence, I write to you rather than to the Rev. Mr. Smith, Stated Clerk of the New Orleans Presbytery, from whom I have already received an official letter, accompanied by a very kind and fraternal offer of services.

Elm Park, April 5th, 1859.

REV. L. W. BACON, My Dear Sir:

I have been pondering seriously and prayerfully the subject matter of our conversation this morning, and I must say that I do not feel *entirely clear* as to the course to be pursued.

In view of *all* the circumstances of the case, it seems to me that I *ought not hastily to commit myself to any definite course* in relation to my *public and official* duties. *More reflection on my part and earnest prayer* to God as well as *consultation* with friends who have *favoured me with their confidence*, and who are deeply interested in my welfare and usefulness as a teacher and a preacher, *must be had* before I can decide on the precise steps to be taken to relieve ministerial brethren from the embarrassment which you named. (See Gospel John, 2d: 24th, 25th.)

I had indulged the hope that I was soon to reap the *peaceable fruits* of my long and bitter trials—but if I am to taste yet *more* of the *wormwood* and the *gall*, and be subjected to still *greater "perils"* than those through which I have already passed—*God's will be done*.

That the great Head of the Church may guide and bless you in all your effort to do good and extend the honor of his name, is the sincere prayer of one who humbly hopes that he is a member of Christ's mystical body, and who now as ever subscribes himself truly yours,

JAMES RICHARDS.

Tuesday evening.

### Answer.

Litchfield, Tuesday evening, April 5th.

REV. DR. RICHARDS, Dear Sir:

Your note (which arrived a few moments since,) I at first intended to answer in person; but it seems to me that I can express myself more satisfactorily in writing.

I am not at all surprised that you hesitate in the decision of so important a question as this which has arisen. I assure you that I sympathize in the struggle of mind which it must doubtless cost you. It seems to me that your mistake lies in *acting* in the matter *before* it is decided. The thing which I think must make an unfavorable impression upon such minds as are already prejudiced against you, is that while you hesitate to ask the approbation of the pastors, you should have no hesitation at all about the far more momentous matter of preaching. I am no surprised that a bad report (however unjust) among "them that are without," should have been deemed by you a sufficient reason for refraining, for a time, from being a *member* of a church: I only wonder that it did not seem even a stronger reason for not entering, for a time, upon the position of a *minister*. I. Tim., iii, 7 seems explicit on this point.

Excuse the roughness of my sentences, I only want to get my meaning out fairly.

But my object in communicating with you on this subject has been, not to volunteer advice with regard to *your* duty,—I should not have alluded to that but for your very frank invitation,—but simply that you might be advised of what I conceive to be *mine* and that of my brethren in the pastoral office. That duty I conceive to be threefold.

1. *To the churches.* Some rule is necessary to save the churches from ignorant and unworthy impostors in the pulpit. Among Baptists and (I believe) English Independents the rule requires an examination before the church of which the candidate is a member, and a certificate of their approbation. Here the rule is different; but it is *the rule* nevertheless, and it is indispensable to good order. We all know you to be an able and learned man; but if we examine no man except on the suspicion that he is a blockhead, we shall examine nobody at all. My impression is perfectly clear and satisfactory of your soundness in the faith; but if we on the strength of an *impression*, suffer you to preach as if by our approbation and yet without any credentials, we throw away the only safe-guard of the churches against novices and heretics. The Northfield church would have a right to complain that the pastors had been treacherous to their confidence, if we should be *unfaithful in this matter*.

2. We have a duty to you. If any brother becomes the subject of an evil report, which follows him to annoy him, and to circumscribe his usefulness, obviously the very first duty and service which we can render him is to inquire into the matter, and to vindicate him by declaring his innocence. I do not see but that this is exactly your case and ours. If your case is perfectly clear and satisfactory, all the more easy for examination; if it is any wise difficult or embarrassed, all the greater necessity for an examination. If there is no difficulty about satisfying the pastors, why not do it? If there is difficulty about it, why is it not all the more important to do it?

The very important consideration which you mentioned this afternoon, that of your health, and the importance of avoiding needless excitement, is open to the same sort of answer. The same considerations of health which should lead you to avoid an informal conference with the neighboring pastors, ought to forbid you to undergo the weekly excitement and fatigue, at the close of your week's laborious duties, of supplying a pulpit. A providential call to do the latter of these must seem to be a providential call to do the other first.

I cannot but sympathize with you in the thought of your protracted trials, to which you so feelingly allude. But it is impossible for me to think it a hardship that you should not be permitted to over-ride all the laws and discipline of our churches, or that you should not be admitted to the confidence of the associated ministers and churches while offering no opportunity to them to satisfy the doubts of any of their number, touching your character and standing.

3. We owe a duty to ourselves. For all these irregularities we are justly held responsible, and to all the reproach of flying rumors unfavourable to you, and which are not brought to investigation and set at rest, we are justly obnoxious, so long as you occupy this position with our tacit consent. We are so fixed that we can neither deny the charges, nor disclaim the responsibility. Such responsibility as this I do not think we have any right to assume; nor does it seem just that you should impose it on us, for even a single week.

As I have said, I assume no authority whatever. You are independent; the Northfield church is independent, except so far as it may have bound itself by compact. Just so, however, all the pastors and churches of this district are independent. And there is no difficulty in devising action which shall rectify the irregularity complained of, without in the slightest degree trenching on the independence of church or individual.

If the relations of parties should continue as at present, I should think it my duty to bring the subject to the notice of the Association at the earliest opportunity.

I close abruptly, for it is long after midnight. But I am happy to know that I have had too many opportunities to show my personal and neighborly good will, to make it needful for me to disclaim any motive for the above resolution but such as appear on the face of the letter. Truly yours,

L. W. BACON.

**Rev. L. W. Bacon, to the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery of New Orleans.**

*Litchfield, Conn., April 6th, 1859.*

Rev. and dear Sir:

Will you have the kindness to send me a statement of the ecclesiastical standing of Dr. James Richards, formerly pastor of a church in your presbytery.

In case any censure exist against him, if there are also any circumstances that may mitigate the moral effect of the censure, or if you have any knowledge of a disposition among the members of the presbytery to reverse or alleviate the sentence in view of facts which have since transpired, I should esteem it a favor to be advised of them. I write simply by my own authority, but your answer will be a kindness not only to me, but to the churches of our common Lord in this region, into whose pulpits Dr. Richards desires to be admitted.

Wishing to you, and to the church under your charge, the blessing of grace, mercy and peace, I am yours fraternally,

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*Elm Park, April 5th, 1859.*

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*Tuesday evening.*

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1. *To the churches.* Some rule is necessary to save the churches from ignorant and unworthy impostors in the pulpit. Among Baptists and (I believe) English Independents the rule requires an examination before the church of which the candidate is a member, and a certificate of their approbation. Here the rule is different; but it is *the rule* nevertheless, and it is indispensable to good order. We all know you to be an able and learned man; but if we examine no man except on the suspicion that he is a blockhead, we shall examine nobody at all. My impression is perfectly clear and satisfactory of your soundness in the faith; but if we, on the strength of an *impression*, suffer you to preach as if by our approbation and yet without any credentials, we throw away the only safe-guard of the churches against novices and heretics. The Northfield church would have a right to complain that the pastors had been treacherous to their confidence, if we should be *unfaithful in this matter*.

2. We have a duty to you. If any brother becomes the subject of an evil report, which follows him to annoy him, and to circumscribe his usefulness, obviously the very first duty and service which we can render him is to inquire into the matter, and to vindicate him by declaring his innocence. I do not see but that this is exactly your case and ours. If your case is perfectly clear and satisfactory, all the more easy for examination; if it is any wise difficult or embarrassed, all the greater necessity for an examination. If there is no difficulty about satisfying the pastors, why not do it? If there is difficulty about it, why is it not all the more important to do it?

The very important consideration which you mentioned this afternoon, that of your health, and the importance of avoiding needless excitement, is open to the same sort of answer. The same considerations of health which should lead you to avoid an informal conference with the neighboring pastors, ought to forbid you to undergo the weekly excitement and fatigue, at the close of your week's laborious duties, of supplying a pulpit. A providential call to do the latter of these must seem to be a providential call to do the other first.

I cannot but sympathize with you in the thought of your protracted trials, to which you so feelingly allude. But it is impossible for me to think it a hardship that you should not be permitted to over-ride all the laws and discipline of our churches, or that you should not be admitted to the confidence of the associated ministers and churches while offering no opportunity to them to satisfy the doubts of any of their number, touching your character and standing.

3. We owe a duty to ourselves. For all these irregularities we are justly held responsible, and to all the reproach of flying rumors unfavourable to you, and which are not brought to investigation and set at rest, we are justly obnoxious, so long as you occupy this position with our tacit consent. We are so fixed that we can neither deny the charges, nor disclaim the responsibility. Such responsibility as this I do not think we have any right to assume; nor does it seem just that you should impose it on us, for even a single week.

As I have said, I assume no authority whatever. You are independent; the Northfield church is independent, except so far as it may have bound itself by compact. Just so, however, all the pastors and churches of this district are independent. And there is no difficulty in devising action which shall rectify the irregularity complained of, without in the slightest degree trenching on the independence of church or individual.

If the relations of parties should continue as at present, I should think it my duty to bring the subject to the notice of the Association at the earliest opportunity.

I close abruptly, for it is long after midnight. But I am happy to know that I have had too many opportunities to show my personal and neighborly good will, to make it needful for me to disclaim any motive for the above resolution but such as appear on the face of the letter. Truly yours,

L. W. BACON.

Rev. L. W. Bacon, to the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery of New Orleans.

*Litchfield, Conn., April 6th, 1859.*

Rev. and dear Sir:

Will you have the kindness to send me a statement of the ecclesiastical standing of Dr. James Richards, formerly pastor of a church in your presbytery.

In case any censure exist against him, if there are also any circumstances that may mitigate the moral effect of the censure, or if you have any knowledge of a disposition among the members of the presbytery to reverse or alleviate the sentence in view of facts which have since transpired, I should esteem it a favor to be advised of them. I write simply by my own authority, but your answer will be a kindness not only to me, but to the churches of our common Lord in this region, into whose pulpits Dr. Richards desires to be admitted.

Wishing to you, and to the church under your charge, the blessing of grace, mercy and peace, I am yours fraternally,

LEONARD W. BACON.

Answer.

Warren, Aug. 25th, 1859.

Rev. Sir:

In reply to yours of the 24th, I will say that when we engaged Dr. Richards to preach for us, we supposed him to be in good standing. Nothing was said on that subject by us to him, or by him to us; neither did we suspect anything to the contrary, until he had been with us some four weeks, and then it came from such a source I did not credit it. I do not recollect now of hearing him say anything about his difficulty at New Orleans, until the Sabbath of his illness here. At that time the committee asked him the question, Why he did not tell them of his standing when they engaged him? His reply was, *How can a man tell these things of himself?*

As to the cause of his illness here, I have no means of knowing it to be different from what he states.

Respectfully yours,

H. J. TAYLOR.

To Isaac D. Patterson, Esq., New Preston, Conn.

[This letter was *mutato nomine*, substantially the same with the letter to Mr. Taylor of Warren, omitting the second paragraph.]

Answer.

New Preston, Sept. 6th, 1859.

Dear Sir:

Yours was received in due time; negligence is my excuse for not answering it sooner.

You make some inquiries about Dr. James Richards; Whether any conversation passed between us, on the subject of his standing in the ministry? Whether he made any statement to me on this subject, when he was in New Preston, and if so what?

I do not now recollect that he did make any statement with reference to his standing in the ministry; nor would he be likely to, if his standing was not good, as I now suppose it was not.

We did not hire Dr. Richards to supply our desk. We had engaged Mr. Hempstead to supply it for a few months, and in the mean time Mr. Hempstead wished to be absent for one or two Sabbaths, I think two, and Dr. Richards preached for him during his absence. I supposed at the time his standing was good as a minister of the gospel, and that he had clean papers, although I did not inquire of him for his credentials; but have since learned that he has been silenced or suspended by two different Presbyteries. Rev. Mr. Hempstead, I suppose, could give you all the information you need on the subject.

Yours truly,

I. D. PATTERSON

To Rev. L. P. Hickok, D. D., Schenectady, N. Y.  
Vice-President of Union College.

Aug. 25, 1859.

[After the statement of the fact of Dr. Richards's application and examination, and the appointment of the Committee, the letter proceeds:]

Will you have the kindness to tell me whether, from facts within your personal knowledge, you have formed any clear and decided opinion of Dr. Richards's fitness for the gospel ministry, and particularly on the points of truth and veracity?

Also whether there is any such common fame against him for inaccuracy as would affect his credibility as a witness in his own behalf?

If you can contribute anything in the way of counsel or suggestion that can help us to a wise and just conclusion, we shall receive it gratefully. \* \* \*

Yours truly,

L. W. BACON.



**Answer.***Union College, August 27th, 1859.*

Dear Sir:

I have not doubted the propriety of Dr. Richards's deposition from the gospel ministry, though the facts on which it was grounded were not within my personal knowledge. From sources of information that I suppose myself obliged to credit, I have felt convinced that both before and since his deposition, his conduct was wholly unworthy a Christian minister; but from my personal knowledge I can say nothing. I should much prefer to hear of confession and promises of reformation, than, as you say, "a vindication of his integrity throughout the whole course of his ministry."

I have rejoiced to understand that his conduct and success as a teacher have been so favorable since his residence at Litchfield, and I should wish to do nothing to discourage or embarrass him; but it becomes a different matter, when he asks for admission again to preach the gospel. That office should not be sought or given, without high and unquestionable standing.† \* \* \* \*

I would do all I might to help him in business and socially; I could not aid in putting him into the ministry without greater evidence of reformation.

Most cordially,

L. P. HICKOK.

\* \* I think Rev. Henry Mills, D. D., Auburn, would be a better source from which to obtain information about Dr. Richards than myself. He is friendly to him and knows, I think, much more than I do. He has friends who live in and near Morristown, where Dr. Richards was some years settled.

**To Rev. Geo. B. Cheever, D. D., New York.***August 25, 1859.*

[After a statement of Dr. Richards's application, examination, and the appointment of the Committee, the letter proceeds:]

Dr. Richards informed us that during the pendency of his trial before the Presbytery of Elizabethtown, he was acting as temporary supply of your pulpit; and that after he returned from New Orleans under censure, you stood by him as a friend and adviser, and that it was in accordance with your advice that he determined to act "in total disregard of that censure."

Will you have the kindness to inform us how far these statements of Dr. Richards are in accordance with the facts as you remember them?

Also, (as Dr. Richards has made reference to you) please state whether you are prepared to recommend him to us, from your knowledge of his character, as a man worthy of being commended by us to the confidence of the churches as a candidate for the Christian ministry. \* \* \*

Yours respectfully, L. W. BACON.

**Answer.***New York, Sept. 20th, 1859.*

My dear Sir:

I have been absent several weeks, and regret that your letter should remain so long unanswered.

My recollection of the circumstances to which you refer, in regard to Mr. Richards is very imperfect indeed, but accords with his statement of the matter. I have known nothing at all concerning him for a considerable time, but as to the censure of the Presbytery of New Orleans, to which you refer, I remember that my conviction was that it deserved not to be regarded, and that he could safely act in entire contempt of it. I know nothing against his character as a candidate, and should rejoice to see him settled and useful as a Congregational minister.

Yours most truly,

GEORGE B. CHEEVER.

†The paragraph here omitted gives account of a transaction which it is not necessary here to detail. If the omitted lines are called for by the friends of Dr. Richards, they can be produced.

**To Frederick Stringer, Esq., New Orleans.**

*Aug. 25th, 1859.*

Dear Sir:

Dr. James Richards, formerly of New Orleans, but for three years past a resident of this place, has officiated a number of times in several churches of this region, notwithstanding the censure which rests upon him from the Presbytery of New Orleans. Being remonstrated with for this irregularity, he has finally presented himself to the Litchfield South Association, of which I am a member, and been examined on his application for a license to preach. His statements before the Association, (which were in vindication of his entire career,) made a very favorable impression on the pastors present, but it was thought wise to defer final action in the matter, until inquiries should have been instituted by a Committee appointed for that purpose, of which I am chairman.

I wrote at once to my friend, Rev. E. R. Beadle of Hartford,\* asking him to give me the name of some wise and faithful member of the Third Presbyterian Church whom I might address in the matter. He gave me two names, of which yours was one; and accordingly I write to you to ask:—

1. What is your opinion of the moral and religious character of Dr. Richards?
2. In your judgment, can the phenomena which were considered as evidence of drunkenness by the Presbytery of New Orleans, be accounted for as the effect of bodily or mental disease?
3. What is the prevailing opinion, in the Third Presbyterian Church, with regard to Dr. Richards's character, especially on the two points of veracity and temperance?

Answers to these questions, with any suggestions which will be likely to aid us in coming to a wise and just conclusion, will be a valuable service rendered to the cause and church of Christ in this part of the country.

Yours in Christian respect and duty,

L. W. BACON.

[Another copy of the above letter was addressed to Wm. C. Raymond, Esq., New Orleans.]

**Answer.**

*New Orleans, Sept. 23d, 1859.*

Dear Sir:

Absence from the city has prevented me from responding to yours of 25th August.

As a witness in the trial of Dr. Richards, my testimony is on record, and will probably in due time be placed before you. A subsequent expression of opinion therefore does not appear to me to be proper, especially as the Presbytery of which I am a member may be called upon to take further action in the case. I therefore waive the answers to your three questions.

I would however suggest that the action of our Presbytery, composed of men as pure in character as can be found in our church, should not be lightly esteemed. The patience, prayerful attention, deep sorrow and solicitude for the absent accused, all confirm their faithfulness, and the results of that investigation can only be ascribed to the spiritual guidance of the great Head of the church.

Brother F. Stringer, whom you addressed, concurs in the foregoing, and begs you to accept it in lieu of a formal answer

Yours Respectfully,

W. C. RAYMOND,  
Elder, 3d Presbyterian Church.

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\*Former pastor of the Third Presbyterian Church in New Orleans, in which office he was succeeded by Dr. Richards.

To Rev. Henry Mills, D. D., Auburn.

August 31st, 1859.

[After stating the circumstances of the appointment of the Committee, and that Dr. Hickok had recommended addressing Dr. Mills, for answers to the two questions which had been put to himself, the letter proceeds:—]

I trust, Sir, that I need no further apology for addressing to you the same inquiries which I put to Dr. Hickok. We shall be truly grateful,—pastors and churches,—for any pertinent information, and shall especially rejoice if your answers shall tend to corroborate the statements of Dr. Richards, and thus restore him to the confidence of the churches and of the public.

Answer.

Auburn, N. Y., Sept. 5th, 1859.

Dear Sir:

Yours of 31st ult. was duly received.

Any hope I may have of him about whom you inquire, looks to the future, not to the past; and must have for its basis his acknowledgments and the evidence of his amendment, rather than "his own vindication of his entire career as a minister, as being pure from any just reproach."

Several years have passed since I had any opportunity for personal observation of his course. After several experiments in different and distant places, he has been renewedly on probation at Litchfield now for three years;—and if your Association can unite in the testimony that during that period nothing has occurred making questionable his veracity or sobriety, I would rejoice,—though his self-vindication, I must confess, excites some fears of relapse.

The subject is an unpleasant one. I would have preferred saying nothing. I could say much. I, perhaps, have already said too much. But when duly appealed to, I could not well say less, nor, honestly, *otherwise*.

With much regard, yours,

HENRY MILLS.

To Rev. Theodore L. Cuyler, New York,

[The same questions were addressed as to Drs. Hickok and Mills.]

Answer.

(PRIVATE\*)

{ 22 Rutgers Street,  
N. Y., Sept. 8th, 1859.

Rev. and dear Brother:

You write me in regard to poor *Richards*, whose career has been a sad and wretched one indeed.

His first ministry was in my native town, Aurora, N. Y. There he had no character for "*veracity*."

Then he preached in Morristown, N. J., (my mother's native town,) and there he lost his character for "*sobriety*."

What Mr. Richards is now I do not know. I hope he has reformed. But when I used to know him, he was licentious, untruthful, and addicted to strong drink. If Mr. Richards is a *changed* man,—thoroughly changed, and you know it,—then restore him to the pulpit. But if not, let him alone.

Our old friend, Dr. Henry Mills, of the Auburn Theological Seminary, knows more of Richards than any man in America. Write to him.

Towards Mr. Richards I have no personal unkindness, but I should want strong evidence indeed to convince me to vote for his restoration to the pulpit.

Excuse haste. Frankly and fraternally yours,

THEO. L. CUYLER.

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\*This injunction has been removed by Mr. Cuyler.

To Rev. James T. English, Liberty Corner, N. J.,

*Stated Clerk of the Presbytery of Elizabethtown.*

[The Committee wrote]

... "To ask the favor of a copy of the *charges and specifications*, and the *action* of the Presbytery upon them; also of *any subsequent action* that may have been taken by the Presbytery, after their record in the case had been submitted to the Synod."

### Answer.

*Liberty Corner, N. J., Sept. 13th, 1859.*

Rev. and dear Sir:

Yours of the 5th instant is at hand. The records of Presbytery in the case of Dr. Richards are voluminous. I will try and give you the substance in brief.

You ask for the "*charges and specifications* tabled, &c.;—The *action* of the Presbytery upon them; also *any subsequent action* that may have been taken by the Presbytery after their record in the case had been submitted to the Synod."

#### 1. Charges and specifications, &c.

Charge first; *Drunkenness*.

The specifications under it are eight in number,—times and places all different, and one on a Sabbath named "in the pulpit morning and evening."

Charge second; *Lewd and profane Language*.

The specifications are three in number.

Charge third; *Abusing his wife* by frequently defaming her character, assaulting her person, and striking her with violence.

The specifications are four in number.

Charge fourth; *Persecution and falsehood*.

The specifications are three.

Charge fifth; *Attempting to have illicit intercourse* with ——— in his own house about the middle of February, 1850.

#### 2. "The action of the Presbytery upon them."

"Resolved, first, that the 1st and 2d charges are proved, that the 3d and 4th charges are proved in part, and that the 5th charge is not proved at all. But that the criminality of Dr. Richards is in the view of Presbytery greatly modified on the ground of insanity.

"Resolved, secondly, that the judgment of this Presbytery in view of the whole case is this: that Dr. Richards be requested, and he is hereby enjoined to demit the functions of the ministry, until the meeting of this Presbytery in Oct. 1852.\*"

Ten members "protested against the proceedings as irregular, on the ground that no formal vote was taken and recorded, as to the guilt or innocence of the accused as to the charges on which he had been tried."

Dr. Richards "submitted to their decision, and would endeavor to conform himself to their advice, according to his ordination vows. At the same time, he asked for himself their sympathies and prayers, in the difficult and trying circumstances in which he was placed."

#### 3. "Any subsequent action," &c.

Allow me to say that *no action* of any kind was taken in the case by the Presbytery, after their record had been submitted to the Synod. All that the Presbytery did, they did before their decision in the case came before the upper judicatory for approval. Dr. Richards was suspended Nov. 15th, 1851. The period for which he was suspended, terminated at "the meeting of this Presbytery in October (first Tuesday) 1852." The records of the Presbytery came up regularly for review two weeks after (third Tuesday of October, 1852,) and did not include (they never do) the doings of the Presbytery at the meeting two weeks previous,—when "Dr. Richards was permitted to resume the duties of his office, and in so doing is

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\* The date of this minute is Nov. 1851.

affectionately recommended to the kindness and sympathy of the churches and the people of God." Dr. Richards had been tried, condemned, suspended and restored, and was dismissed in good standing to the Presbytery of New Brunswick, at the time that the records of the Presbytery in his case came regularly before the Synod. There could therefore be no *'subsequent action.'*

I forbear making any further explanation or comment at present. If after receiving this 'brief' you still think you would prefer the whole record, I will have it copied for you. I shall be greatly obliged if you will send me the substance of your deliberations and decision in the case. I will answer any questions, or do any thing for you touching this matter, in my power.

I certify that the extracts above are true extracts from the minutes of the Presbytery of Elizabethtown; and that all the representations and explanations herein given are in accordance with the same.

J. T. ENGLISH, *Stated Clerk.*

To Thos. Beals, Esq., Canandaigua, N. Y.

Sept. 7th, 1859.

Dear Sir:

A brief statement of the circumstances in which I write will be a sufficient apology to you for my liberty in addressing you.

Dr. James Richards, who is now under censure of deposition of the Presbytery of New Orleans, has applied to the Litchfield South Association, of which I am a member, to restore him to the ministry by granting him their recommendation and license to preach. His statement to the Association, (which made a very favorable impression) was in vindication of his Christian character through the entire course of his ministry. The very grave responsibility of the case made it seem to the Association unwise to proceed to act finally upon it, until they had inquired into the truthfulness of Dr. Richards's statement; and they accordingly adjourned until the 27th of September, appointing for the meantime a Committee of Inquiry, of which I am chairman.

My friend, Henry W. Taylor, Esq., writes to me, in reply to some inquiries, that he has had no opportunity of personal knowledge of Dr. Richards since he became a minister, and suggests that you could give us more and better information than any other person in that community. The importance of the case is such, both to Dr. Richards, and to the purity and order of the church of Christ, that I venture to submit to you the same questions, substantially, which I asked of Mr. Taylor.

1. Whether from facts that have come within your personal knowledge, you have formed any clear and decided opinion on Dr. Richards's character in general, and particularly as concerns his moral fitness for the Christian ministry? and if so, what that opinion is?

2. Whether you can communicate to us any authentic *facts* that either corroborate or discredit Dr. Richards's assertion of his purity and integrity of character throughout the period of his ministry?

Your answers to these questions will have great weight with our body, and will be thankfully received. We shall especially rejoice, if they shall tend to recommend Dr. Richards to our confidence.

Respectfully, and truly yours,

L. W. BACON.

**Answer.**

Canandaigua, Sept. 10th, 1859.

Dear Sir:

Your letter of 7th inst. is just received. My neighbor, Judge Taylor, has referred you to me to answer "whether from facts that have come within your personal knowledge, you have formed any clear and decided opinion of Dr. Richards's character in general, and particularly as concerns his moral fitness for the Christian ministry? and if so, what that opinion is? Whether you can communicate to us any authentic *facts* that either corroborate or discredit Dr. Richards's assertion of his purity and integrity of character throughout the whole period of his ministry?"

I answer, your letter is respectful, and I respond promptly. I have had no correspondence with Dr. Richards since he left Morristown, N. J. That he has been deposed from the ministry, I have no evidence, except the New York Observer, in which I read the *announcement* and without comment. I have not made inquiry, and know nothing but what comes through his children. They are daughters, 14 and 16 years of age, and have lived in my family many years. I ask no questions, and am without information. It appears to me you cannot go behind the *record*. You must go to the body who severed the relation. You have been his neighbor for many years. Is he of good report in your midst? This question being settled, you are well prepared then to act *ecclesiastically*. Very respectfully,

Your most obedient servant,

THOMAS BEALS.

To Rev. O. E. Daggett, D. D., Canandaigua, N. Y.

Sept. 7th, 1859.

My dear Doctor:

1. What is your opinion of Dr. James Richards, formerly of Penn Yan, and what are your reasons for it?

2. What is the public opinion of him in Western New York, especially among wise and good men who have had opportunity of personal knowledge of him, and about him?

I write on behalf of the Litchfield South Association, to whom Dr. Richards has lately applied for license to preach, asserting his innocence of the charges preferred against him at New Orleans, and that he has held fast his integrity throughout the whole period of his ministry. His statement made a favorable impression on the brethren present, but they adjourned the case until the 27th inst., and appointed a Committee of Inquiry, for which I write, as chairman. \* \* \*

With kind remembrances, &c.,

L. W. BACON..

**Answer.**

Canandaigua, Sept. 10th, 1859.

My dear Sir:

I have received your letter of the 7th inst. asking, 1st, What is my opinion of Mr. James Richards, and what my reasons for it: and 2d, "What is the public opinion of him in Western New York, especially among wise and good men who have had opportunity of personal knowledge of him and about him?"

To the 1st question, I answer; my personal acquaintance with him was never more than slight and casual, and I have not now met him for several years, nor did I ever investigate the charges and proceedings against him, either in New Jersey or in New Orleans: hence I have no business to pronounce an individual opinion on his merits.

To the 2d I answer: As far as I have heard him spoken of in Western New York, his reputation as to integrity and sobriety is not good.

Yours sincerely,

O. E. DAGGETT.

To Charles B. White, M. D., New Orleans.

[The inquiries addressed to Dr. White are given in full in his reply. He was a member of the Presbytery of New Orleans at the time of the trial and excommunication of Dr. Richards. Dr. White is a practising physician. His answer did not reach the Committee till after their Report had been made,]

**Answer.**

New Orleans, Sept. 24th, 1859.

Dear Sir:

You inquire

1st. "In your judgment, can the phenomena which were considered by the Presbytery of New Orleans to be evidence of drunkenness in Dr. Richards, be accounted for as the effect of bodily or mental disease, simulating the symptoms of intoxication?"

*In answer:* The evidence which I heard at the trial of Dr. Richards, left no doubt in my mind that the "phenomena" above-mentioned were the effects of intoxication. I do not think they could be considered the manifestation of mental or bodily disease.

*Query 2d.* "How are opinions divided in the Christian community of New Orleans with respect to the justice or injustice of the ecclesiastical sentence against Dr. Richards?"

*Answer:* I am not aware of any division of opinion in regard to the matter mentioned in this previous question.

Dr. Richards, as you are probably informed, was upon one occasion picked up in the streets in a supposed state of intoxication, and carried to the watch-house until morning, and an account of the affair published in one of the daily papers. The Christian community were so saddened by the grievous wound to the cause of their Master, that as little as possible was said about the occurrence, and I myself never heard a word of censure in regard to the course of the Presbytery, nor have I known of any objection made by Christians or others to the ecclesiastical sentence passed upon Dr. Richards.

*Query 3d.* "Would it, or would it not, in your view, be possible to account for facts in the Dr. Richards's life at New Orleans on the idea that he was a man of integrity and purity of character?"

*Answer:* I think the facts in Dr. Richards's life in New Orleans do not consist with the idea that he was a man of integrity of character.

The evidences of frequent duplicity, and unmistakable falsehood, persistent through months, I presume had much weight in deciding the Presbytery to pronounce the sentence of *excommunication from the church*.

I would respectfully suggest that a copy of the minutes of the trial from the Presbyterial records would furnish to the Association the means of arriving at a satisfactory conclusion.

You will observe that I have not responded to one expression of the third question,—"*purity of character*." Not knowing precisely the force of the expression, I have not said anything upon that point. At this distance of time, I do not recollect that any evidence of licentiousness was brought forward against him.

Allow me to hope that your associates and yourself may be led by the Holy Spirit to opinions and actions which will conserve the purity of the church, and render honor unto our Master. With respect, I remain,

Yours truly, C. B. WHITE.

To Rev. M. L. P. Thompson, D. D., Buffalo, N. Y.

[After putting the two questions which were addressed to Dr. Daggett, the Committee ask:]

Sept. 13th, 1859.

*Qu. 3.* It has been intimated to me that reports seriously to the disparagement of Dr. Richards's character were in circulation before he left Western New York. If this be true, can you suggest an explanation why these reports were not made subject of inquiry by the ecclesiastical courts to which he was then amenable?

**Answer.**

Buffalo, Sept. 17th, 1859.

Rev. and dear Sir:

I am really sorry that you have found it necessary to address me on the subject of your letter. Personally, I have no knowledge of any of the things for which Dr. Richards was deposed from the ministry. I am nevertheless constrained to say that the settled convictions of my mind are all opposed to his restoration. I have no doubt that it is better for him and for the church that he shall continue as he is. As his own friend, were I consulted, I should advise him to remain quiet. I may have been misinformed, but my belief, on the testimony of those who know him best, is that he is still addicted to the occasional excessive use of intoxicating drinks. For eleven years past I have had no communication with him. At that

time, some events transpired under my own observation, which satisfied me that he was a dishonest and dishonorable man. I can not attempt a detailed narrative of these matters, but should be ready to testify if called upon.

As to the reputation of Dr. Richards generally in Western New York, it is undoubtedly bad. I do not think that those who know him have any confidence in him. If you have time,\* write to Dr. Gridley of Waterloo, who can speak far more positively on this head than I can. Dr. Gridley had personal dealings with Dr. Richards, and knew him well.

In answer to your 3d question, I can only say that at the time of my leaving Canandaigua I was not aware of the existence of any rumors prejudicial to Dr. Richards's character. If there were any after that, previous to his going to New Jersey, I apprehend that they were not of a sufficiently tangible character to justify any public action. Dr. Gridley, I know, felt himself greatly aggrieved by him in relation to some pecuniary transaction, and was forced, I think, to use legal remedies; but the grievance did not reach the point of extreme irritation, if I am correctly informed, until about the time of Dr. Richards's removal. My impression is that the rumors in that region, which might have called for public investigation, did not become flagrant, in any sense, until his removal from it.

Richards may be a thoroughly reformed man. I should be sorry to do him an injustice. If the action of your Association is to be based on the evidence of his present fitness to exercise the ministerial office, then I apprehend you have no concern with the old matters upon which he was deposed, unless he now denies them. If the question relates to the old matters, you have a wide field of inquiry before you, and will find it necessary to travel far and look sharp, before you reach a wise conclusion.

I beg to say in closing that I have a very pleasant remembrance of you and but for the occasion, should have felt a real pleasure in this revival of our acquaintance.

Praying for your welfare, and that your Association may be guided aright in its action on the case before you, I am with love,

Truly yours,

M. L. P. THOMPSON.

To Rev. J. T. English, Stated Clerk, Liberty Corner, N. J.

Sept. 17th, 1859.

... 1. Please to give me the specifications under charge 2d, "Lewd and profane language," and charge 4th, "Prevarication and falsehood."

2. Did the Synod take any action, when the case came before them "on the record," in disapproval of the action of Presbytery? . . .

#### Answer.

Liberty Corner, N. J., Sept. 23d, 1859.

Rev. and dear Sir:

Your second letter of inquiry in the matter of Dr. Richards is at hand.

You make two points:

1. The specifications under charges 2 and 4.

A. *Charge 2d*; "Lewd and profane language." Specifications, three:

1. At his own house in the early part of July, 1849.

2. At his own house and at Ira C. Whitehead's, also on his way to Trenton in January, 1850.

3. At Ira C. Whitehead's, Feb. 1st, 1850, also at other places.

B. *Charge 4th*. "Prevarication and falsehood." Specifications, four:

1. Denying, contrary to fact, that he used strong drink except when advised thereto by his physician.

2. Denying that he had ever abused his wife.

3. Falsely asserting that he had been invited by the session, or one of its members, to resume the pulpit after he had given it up.

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\* The Committee had not sufficient time to get an answer from Dr. Gridley, before the meeting.



4. Saying that Mr. Voorhees and Deacon Prodden had told him that his usefulness was at an end, and then denying that he had said so.

II. "Did the Synod take any action . . . in disapproval of the action of the Presbytery?"

A few preliminaries, here, if you please.

The charges were tabled Aug. 19, 1851, and the suit commenced by the examination of the first witness, Sept. 2nd. Between seventy and one hundred witnesses were sworn; many of them were recalled, and some of them for the third or fourth time. A very large number of letters were read, besides a variety of documents, sessional records, etc., etc. Between twenty-five and thirty days were consumed in the investigation, and the decision was at last reached on a Saturday evening *at a late hour*, about the middle of November. Presbytery had come together on Wednesday to decide the case, (expecting to return home the day following,) but were not able to do so until the evening of the fourth day. By this time all were wearied and anxious to get home. Some had obtained leave and gone. Much confusion prevailed; different motions were offered, and papers read, and votes taken, &c. "Some cried one thing, and some another; for the assembly was confused, and the more part knew not"—what to do. In the midst of the confusion, "the calling of the roll was commenced," but was soon "suspended to give place for a minute on which the members of Presbytery might unite, and during the discussion of said minute" another paper was offered and adopted, but was afterwards "on motion reconsidered." "After its reconsideration" the paper was adopted, the substance of which I sent you before. Even this was not satisfactory to many of the Presbytery, and *five members* had "leave to dissent from the judgment of the Presbytery," and *ten members* protested "on the ground that no formal vote was taken and recorded as to the guilt or innocence of the accused as to the charges on which he had been tried."

This protest, or the irregularity in the proceedings of the Presbytery which was the ground of it, formed the basis of the action which the Synod took in its review of our records.

This action I will now give you. A, B, and C were appointed a Committee on the records of the Presbytery of Elizabethtown, and subsequently reported to Synod that the records be approved, *except*, &c., "on pages 643—4, vol. 2, in the case of Dr. Richards, the Committee recommend the following exceptions:—

"1st. That it was due to the accused to have had a direct vote of the Presbytery on each charge, and that the Presbytery ought to have taken such vote instead of uniting the vote as they did after the vote on the second charge.

"2d. That after deciding that Dr. Richards could not be considered guilty on account of insanity,\* yet because the decision was "not satisfactory to some," and notice of protest having been given, a new resolution was adopted, declaring that four of the charges were proved in whole or in part, and that his criminality was modified on the ground of insanity,—this course the Committee consider irregular and unjust.

"The Committee finding that Dr. Richards submitted to the result, and that he has been permitted by the Presbytery to resume the functions of the ministry, do not think it necessary to recommend any farther action than that the report of the Committee appointed to examine these records be entered on the minutes of the Presbytery."

The above is the whole of the report of the Committee of Synod, and the adoption of said report was the only action taken by Synod in the case.

The foregoing is, I believe, about all you ask for at present. If at any subsequent time you need further information in the matter, it would afford me great pleasure to furnish you with whatever it is in my power to communicate. \* \* \*

Yours truly,

J. T. ENGLISH.

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\* This was the paper first adopted by the Presbytery, and afterwards reconsidered.

## CORRESPONDENCE OF DR. RICHARDS WITH MEMBERS OF THE ASSOCIATION.

[The following letters are dated a few days after the appointment of the Committee of Inquiry, and after their correspondence had been commenced and was in progress. Inasmuch as the case of Dr. Richards was pending before the Association before the presentation of his petition for license, it is obvious that it remained before them after that petition was withdrawn. This sudden shift was not suffered to interrupt the business of the Committee.]

### Dr. Richards to the Moderator of the Association.

*Litchfield, Saturday, Aug. 20th, 1859.*

Rev. Mr. LYMAN, Moderator of Litchfield Association South.

Dear Sir:

Since the arrival of the Rev. Dr. Wadsworth in this place, I have had a conference with him touching my application to your body; and he advises me to take the direct method of seeking restoration to the ministry laid down in the Book of Discipline of the Presbyterian Church, and the Rev. Dr. Walter Clarke *concurs*. I therefore withdraw my application for license, that I may refer my case at once to the Presbytery of New Orleans. Yours respectfully,

JAMES RICHARDS.

P. S. My case is now, so far as my request can make it, on the way to New Orleans, and you are relieved of all concern in it. J. R.

### Dr. Richards to Rev. George J. Harrison.

SCRIBE OF THE ASSOCIATION.

*Saturday evening, Aug. 20th, 1859.*

My Dear Sir:

After conference with the Rev. Dr. Clarke of the Mercer Street Presbyterian Church, New York, and with the Rev. Dr. Wadsworth, of the Arch Street Church, Philadelphia, I am advised by them to *withdraw* at once my application for licensure, made to your body, and I have notified accordingly the Moderator of the Association of my withdrawal. My object is to make a direct appeal to the body under whose censure I am now suffering—the *only body which can fully restore me*.\* The Presbytery of New Orleans are already memorialized to this effect. My application to your Association is a *nullity*, and the papers containing that application are *my property* on every principle of civil as well as of ecclesiastical law. You will therefore at once restore them to me. And on behalf of the church of Northfield, of which I am a member, and to whom I regularly minister, at their unanimous call, I would request the *return to them* of the *memorial* addressed to your Association on my behalf.

I am yours respectfully,

JAMES RICHARDS.

### ANSWER.

*Milton, Aug. 24th, 1859.*

Dear Sir:

Your favor of the 20th inst., reached me on the evening of the 22d.

It would afford me pleasure to return to you the papers containing your application to the Litchfield South Association for licensure, did the propriety of it depend only upon my disposition to oblige you.

A moment of reflection, however, will show you that it is impossible for me to do so. The application was committed to my charge not by yourself but by the Association,—subject to their direction and not your own. I, of course, hold myself responsible to them for its safe keeping.

Moreover, your request is evidently founded on an inexplicable misapprehension of the case. Your application to the Association for licensure, instead of being a “nullity,” is an historical fact—a part of the record of the Association, and

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\* Compare Dr. Richards's Memorial, p. 10. “I turn to you, dear brethren, &c.”

the basis of their still unfinished action; and the papers, instead of being your "property on every principle of civil and ecclesiastical law," are the property of the Association, not only on all principles of civil and ecclesiastical law, but on that very obvious principle of common sense, that the documents of a correspondence belong to the party to whom they are addressed and delivered, and not to the person from whom they come.

Allow me to suggest that you would act most regularly, if you were to make your application to the Association of which I am in this matter only a servant; and upon their order I should cheerfully comply with your request.

With earnest desires that this unpleasant matter may so result as to promote the happiness of all concerned, the interests of religion and the glory of God, I am

Respectfully yours, GEO. J. HARRISON,

Scribe of Litchfield South Association.

**Dr. Richards to Rev. George J. Harrison,**

*Litchfield Ct., Sept. 29th, 1859.*

My Dear Sir:

Please return to my address at Litchfield the *paper* signed by me, and addressed to the Litchfield Association South, on or about the middle of August last and which paper you have acknowledged to be in your hands.

I am respectfully yours, &c., in haste,

JAMES RICHARDS.

**Dr. Richards's Request for a Recommendation from Mr. Bacon to the Presbytery of New Orleans.**

[On the evening of Saturday Aug. 30th, (the date of Dr. Richards's withdrawal of his petition for license,) his attorney called on the Rev. L. W. Bacon, with the following paper, to which there were no signatures, but which he labored with much talk to induce Mr. Bacon to sign.]

"To the Presbytery of New Orleans:

"Having heard that James Richards has applied for restoration to the Presbytery of New Orleans, on the ground of confession and reformation, we the undersigned who have known him intimately for the last three years, certify to the Presbytery that we have observed nothing in his life during the aforesaid time, which in our judgment ought to discredit his confession or hinder his restoration.

*"Litchfield Aug. 20th, 1859."*

**Mr. Bacon's Testimonial.**

[Mr. Bacon was astonished at this request, coming within four days of the statements, written and oral, which Dr. Richards had laid before the Association. He accordingly called upon the attorney of Dr. Richards to accompany him, and went to the house of Dr. Richards to ask an explanation of the "confession and repentance" of sins of which he had just, with the most solemn adjurations, declared himself to be innocent; Dr. Richards answered, "My dear fellow, I can explain that in a moment," and averred that by "confession and repentance," he only meant to acknowledge that in a fit of unconsciousness he might have committed some outward act of sin, in which case he was sorry, and hoped that it might never occur again. In accordance with this explanation Mr. Bacon offered to prepare such a paper as would not be ambiguous; which he did as follows:—]

*To the Presbytery of New Orleans:*

In the matter of the petition of the Rev. James Richards, D.D., to your body to be restored to the fellowship of the gospel ministry on the ground of confession and reformation, I desire to say:—

That I have been well acquainted with the petitioner for the space of three years past, during which time I have understood him to maintain and profess his

innocence of any *conscious* moral delinquency in the matters for which he has been accused before your body and condemned;

That understanding the confession of Dr. Richards to signify this simply, that he defers to the testimony of others with regard to matters on which his own conscience does not accuse him, I have no *personal knowledge* of anything in his life during the time aforesaid which should hinder the Presbytery from accepting his confession and restoring him to good standing in the ministry;

That in my judgment, his exercising of the functions of the ministry while under the censure of deposition, although a grievous violation of the order and custom of the churches of God, nevertheless, if considered as the act of a man not conscious of having incurred the moral guilt of the outward sins for which he was condemned, might justly be looked upon with lenience by your reverend court, and that in the event of your removing the censure resting on Dr. Richards, I believe there would be no disposition among the brethren of the ministry here to make these irregularities a bar to receiving him to our fellowship on the offer of credentials from you;

That since my acquaintance with Dr. Richards, I have had occasion to witness a painful proof of his liability to violent attacks of mental aberration, attendant on physical disease, which urgently demands for him the sympathy and kind judgment of Christian men, and tends to corroborate his explanation of those appearances which were the ground of his condemnation before the Presbytery;\*

Finally, that if the Presbytery should see the way clear, in view of all the facts, to restore Dr. Richards to the ministry, and to present him to us as a brother in regular standing, it will be a subject of great joy to myself and to other pastors in this neighborhood, and will give us unfeigned pleasure to welcome him to our fellowship.

LEONARD W. BACON,

Pastor of the First Church of Christ in Litchfield.

*Litchfield, Aug. 22nd, 1859.*

## REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE OF INQUIRY, AND ACTION OF THE ASSOCIATION.

[The Litchfield South Association met, according to adjournment, on the 27th of September, 1859, and the following Report was submitted by Messrs. Bacon, Lyman and Churchill, Committee.]

The Committee of the Litchfield South Association appointed "to make such inquiries" in the case of the application of James Richards for license to preach "as might lead the Association to a wise and just conclusion," respectfully report:

That they have used all diligence and impartiality in fulfilling their commission, and have reached the following result:

1. That there exist against Dr. Richards evil reports, so aggravated in their nature, so extensively believed in the communities where he is best known, and advanced on the responsibility of men of such eminent character for sound judgment and Christian charity as to be in themselves, whether true or false, in some measure a disqualification (I. Tim. iii, 2, 7,) for the ministry of the Gospel.

See Letters of Rev. B. M. Palmer, D.D., Rev. David Magie, D.D., Rev. Laurens P. Hickok, D.D., Rev. Henry Mills, D.D., Rev. Theodore L. Cuyler, Rev. O. E. Daggett, D.D., Rev. M. L. P. Thompson, D.D.

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\* Allusion is here made to the sickness and delirium of Dr. Richards which ensued on his "illness" at Warren. Mr. Bacon was personally attendant on Dr. Richards through that period of delirium, and at that time, and for a long time after, accepted and urged those appearances of bodily and mental disease as a sufficient explanation of the reports of drunkenness at Warren, and as corroborative of Dr. Richards's defense with regard to the matter at New Orleans. But developments subsequent to the writing of the above letter to the Presbytery of New Orleans, leave no room to doubt that Mr. Bacon was deceived, and that the appearances in question were the result of intemperance. It will be noticed that the date of the above letter was before the crushing proofs of Dr. Richards's falsehood had come to the writer's knowledge.

2. That the charges against him of Drunkenness, Falsehood and Fraud are so distinctly presented, on the authority of responsible names, as to make it perfectly easy for Dr. Richards to bring them to issue, and challenge the proof; and that some of them seem, from our information, to be so uniformly believed, in the most influential and friendly quarters, as to make this course on his part, a matter of pressing expediency and obvious duty; so that in the event of his neglecting to seek such an issue of these charges,—still more, in case of his evading opportunities which present themselves of meeting them,—and most of all, in case he shall persist in his resumption of the functions of the ministry in defiance or evasion of those safeguards of its purity which are at once the probation and vindication of the character of its members,—the conclusion of Dr. Richards's guilt of these charges will be almost irresistible.

See Action of the Presbytery of New Orleans, in the case of Common Fame vs. James Richards, Letters of Rev. Laurens P. Hickok, D.D., Rev. Theo. L. Cuyler, Rev. M. L. P. Thompson, D.D.

3. That the Inquiry which has led to the above results, was undertaken because we wished to decide, not on the *former character* of the petitioner, but on the question of his *present veracity* in solemnly asseverating before us his integrity and purity from any scandalous sin throughout his whole career in the ministry; and that the reports and accusations above mentioned afford, until challenged and refuted, strong grounds for the charge that this solemn asseveration was a falsehood;—a charge which is sustained by the subsequent conduct of the petitioner, in withdrawing his petition immediately on the appointment of a Committee of Inquiry, and presenting to another body a request to be restored to the ministry on the ground of *confession, repentance, and reformation*.

4. That our inquiries present to us the following additional grounds for the charge of falsehood against Dr. Richards.

A. In his *written statement* to the Association; that he stated:

(1.) "That he was fully and honorably acquitted of any moral delinquency or obliquity by the Presbytery of Elizabethtown and by the Synod of New Jersey."

Contradicted in the Letters of Rev. David Magie, D. D., and Rev. J. T. English, and in Records of the Presbytery of Elizabethtown.

(2.) That "never to his recollection had he officiated as a minister of religion within our bounds, without a special invitation from the resident pastor or Committee of Supply."

Contradicted (except as the saving clause "to my recollection," may protect it) in the letter of Isaac D. Patterson, Esq., of New Preston.

(3.) That "not even then" (had he officiated as a minister) "without an explicit avowal of his unfortunate position as a minister under the censure of a Southern Presbytery."

Contradicted in the letters of Isaac D. Patterson, New Preston, and Henry Taylor,\* Warren.

B. In his *oral statement* to the Association, that he stated:

(1.) That after his resignation at Morristown, on returning to that place, he found circumstances which led him to *demand* a judicial inquiry.

Contradicted, as to its intent and import, by the letter of Rev. Dr. Magie.

(2.) That the charges on this inquiry were "Intemperance," "Falsehood" (which consisted in declaring that he was not intemperate) and "Profane Swearing" (which occurred as he was in the cars, on the way to the Retreat for the Insane.)

Contradicted, as to its import and intent, by the Records of the Presbytery of Elizabethtown.

(3.) That there was only one instance in New Orleans in which he had the appearance of intoxication.

Contradicted in letter of Rev. Dr. Palmer.

(4.) That he told Isaac D. Patterson of New Preston, before accepting an invitation to preach, that he was not in regular standing.

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\* This was a mistake. The *written statement* of Dr. Richards on this point related to churches within the bounds of the Litchfield South Association. Warren is in the northern half of the county.

Contradicted in Mr. Patterson's letter.

(5.) That he told Mr. Henry Taylor of Warren the same.

Contradicted in Mr. Taylor's letter.

6. In a statement to Rev. John Churchill, and to Deacon Charles Adams, that most or many of the members of the Presbytery which deposed him were men of scandalous lives.

Contradicted in letter of Rev. Dr. Palmer.

5. That the statement last above mentioned affords grounds for laying against him the charge of *calumny* as well as of falsehood.

6. That in the act of accepting engagements to preach in vacant pulpits, as if in regular standing in the ministry, without explicitly avowing his position, Dr. Richards appears to have incurred the guilt of obtaining money and the confidence of churches under false pretenses.

7. That we find no evidence of injustice in the action of the Presbytery of New Orleans, after the refusal of Dr. Richards to submit to its authority and answer its citation,—in proceeding to adjudicate the case; and that in his withdrawal from the Presbytery when, by his own confession he apprehended that charges would be tabled against him, his refusal to submit to their authority, and his disregard of their censure by persisting in the functions of the ministry, he appears to have been guilty of a violation of solemn covenant, and a breach of his ordination vows.

See statements of Dr. Richards to this Association, written and oral. "Form of Government of the Presbyterian Church," Chap. XIV. vii, 4.

8. That it is alleged against Dr. Richards by Common Fame that on the morning of a certain Sabbath in the Spring of 1857, he entered the pulpit of the church in Warren in a state of drunkenness; and that this charge, although contradicted by himself, nevertheless, from its wide notoriety, and the prevalent belief of his guilt among the people of Warren, demands impartial investigation.

See Letter of Geo. Starr, Esq., of Warren.

9. That the reputed character of Dr. Richards's business transactions, during his residence in Litchfield, has been such as to create a Common Fame which demands impartial investigation.

10 That it appears upon inquiry that the general reputation of Dr. Richards where he has been best known, before his residence in Litchfield, with respect to truth and veracity, is such as to affect the credibility of his statements as a witness in his own behalf.

See letters of Dr. Palmer, Dr. Magie, Mr. Cuyler, Dr. Daggett, Dr. Thompson.

On the other hand,

11. That so far as we have learned, Dr. Richards possesses the entire confidence of the church in Northfield, to whom he has been ministering on Sundays for about six\* months past.

See memorial of the church in Northfield to the Association.

The following PREAMBLE AND RESOLUTIONS were unanimously adopted.

Whereas Dr. James Richards has expressed a desire to withdraw his memorial to this body to be recommended to the churches as a candidate for the ministry, and has presented his petition to the Presbytery of New Orleans (under whose censure he now lies) for restoration to the ministry;

I. *Resolved*, That the petitioner have leave to withdraw; and that the scribe be instructed to return to him, at his request, his memorial, retaining a copy to be placed on file.

II. *Resolved*, That although the residence of the petitioner within our bounds,—the fact that his irregularities amongst us had been brought to the notice of this body,—and the fact that he pleaded that he was debarred by circumstances from a fair hearing before the New Orleans Presbytery,—justified us in entertaining his case upon his urgent petition: nevertheless we recognize the Presbytery of New Orleans as the proper body to decide on the question of his restoration to the ministry; and that we are gratified that he has made application directly to that body.

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\* This was a mistake. Nearly ten months has elapsed since Dr. Richards had begun to preach at Northfield.

III. *Resolved*, That in order that the Presbytery of New Orleans may be possessed of any information which we can give, that may assist them in reaching a wise and just conclusion, in a matter in the wise disposal of which we are interested,—a copy of our action relative to this case, and of the report of the Committee of Inquiry be transmitted to said Presbytery, with the salutations of this body.

IV. *Resolved*, That although the matter of Dr. Richards's church-membership is nowise under the cognizance of this body, still, as members of sister churches, we owe a duty to the church which has received him to her communion, and to himself; and that the facts which appear against the character of Dr. Richards be brought, in due time and form, through the prescribed steps of Christian discipline, if needful, to the notice of the church in Northfield.

V. *Resolved*, That the Scribe be instructed to return to the Northfield church, at their request, their memorial to this body, retaining a copy to be placed on file.

VI. *Resolved*, That the Presbytery of New Orleans be respectfully requested to favor us with a copy of their Record in the case of Common Fame *versus* James Richards, and in the matter of the petition of James Richards to be restored to the ministry, for the guidance of this Association, in case we shall be called to take further action on the matter in hand.

VII. *Resolved*, That Brethren Bacon, Lyman, Churchill and Averill, be appointed a committee to carry the above resolutions into effect.

## ACTION OF THE PRESBYTERY OF NEW ORLEANS, OCTOBER, 1859.

[In the Presbytery of New Orleans, at its fall meeting in 1859, the Petition of Dr. Richards to be restored to the Church and Ministry was considered, and the action taken which is contained in the following extract from the published minutes of that meeting.]

The committee to whom were referred and recommitted the papers in the case of Dr. Richards, reported a minute in reference to the case, which was read and considered, item by item, and amended, after which it was adopted *seriatim*, and then unanimously adopted as a whole. The report is as follows:

### REPORT ON DR. RICHARDS'S CASE.

The committee to whom were referred the papers in the case of Dr. James Richards, beg leave to submit the following minute as the action that should be taken in the premises.

These papers, as the Presbytery already knows, from hearing them read in open court, consist—

1. Of Dr. Richards's memorial and petition, praying that the sentence of deposition and excommunication, passed by this Presbytery on the 23d of January, 1856, and under which he now lies, be revoked: and that he may be restored to the fellowship of the church and the functions of the gospel ministry.

2. A large number of testimonials in favor of Dr. Richards, signed by many persons certified as being highly respectable and reliable.

3. A long correspondence between Dr. Richards and the chairman of this committee, upon the points involved in the memorial of the former.

4. A petition from the Congregational church at Northfield, praying for the removal of Dr. Richards's sentence.

5. A second petition to the same end, signed by a number of ladies of the Northfield church.

6. An authenticated copy of the records of the Litchfield South Association, showing the action of that body upon his application to be recognized and authorized by them as a Gospel minister.

7. A certified copy of the application made by Dr. Richards to that body, together with—

8. A certified copy of a report of a Committee of Inquiry, appointed by said Association, to investigate the truth of certain rumors affecting the Christian character of Dr. Richards.

The Presbytery might, perhaps, avoid the responsibility of framing a judgment upon these various documents, upon the ground that, as Dr. Richards, since his deposition, has connected himself with another branch of the Christian church, and has been by them, in accordance with their usages, licensed to preach the gospel.\* his return to this Presbytery is thereby barred. Inasmuch, however, as Dr. Richards in his petition desires to place himself under the jurisdiction of this court; and inasmuch as both the particular church of which he is a member, and the Litchfield South Association, desire that the case should be issued by us, this Presbytery chooses not to stand upon a legal technicality, but to meet fairly the responsibilities of rendering a decision upon the merits of the case as presented in the documents referred to.

After a careful examination of the same, Presbytery does not see its way clear to revoke its former sentence, *simply because there is no satisfactory evidence of the sincerity of Dr. Richards's professed repentance.*

The considerations which lead the minds of Presbytery to this unfavorable opinion, are as follows:

1. The confession made by him to this Presbytery was not spontaneous, but prompted by the advice of others, and only made when obstacles were presented to his reception by the Litchfield South Association.

2. Nowhere in his petition and memorial, nor in any of his letters, does Dr. Richards confess the particular offense for which he was deposed, as a matter of personal consciousness, and involving moral guilt; but contents himself with a general acknowledgment of sin, which any other person might as properly subscribe.

3. The fact that while professing repentance before this body, and praying to be restored upon the ground of confession, Dr. Richards maintains a theory by which to explain the facts and appearances brought out upon the trial, consistently with the assertion of his moral innocence throughout, a theory which is destructive of his confession, and which does not, in the judgment of this Presbytery, at all meet the facts in the case. Even, however, admitting this explanation; while it might be a reason for restoring him to the communion of the church, the Presbytery still adjudges, that the honor of the gospel ministry cannot safely be committed to the keeping of one who is subject to the mental aberration therein assumed, and which has led to such disastrous results.

4. His contumacious disregard of the authority of this body in persisting in exercising the functions of an office from which he had been deposed, which contumacy, instead of being frankly confessed, is, by strong implication, extenuated and justified.

5. The contradiction in spirit, tone, and language, between his memorial to this body and his written application to the Litchfield South Association, with only an interval of seven days between the writing of the two papers.

6. His calumnious misrepresentations and insinuations against the character of those, both living and dead, who constituted the court by which he was tried and condemned.

7. The evidence furnished by the records of the Litchfield South Association, of repeated misrepresentation in his statements to them. Though these may not be considered as substantiated, having never been submitted to a judicial investigation, they yet leave him under such a cloud of doubt as forbids this Presbytery, under the requirements of the *Book of Discipline*, chapter 5, section 16, to grant the prayer of the petitioner. Upon all these grounds, be it now

*Resolved*, That the prayer of James Richards be not granted, but that the Presbytery sees in the documents submitted to it, additional reason for judging him unworthy to exercise the office of a minister of the Gospel.

*Resolved*, That this action be communicated to James Richards, to the Northfield church, and to the Litchfield South Association.

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\* It is difficult to conjecture by what means this impression could have been made on the minds of the Presbytery. See Appendix, No. V, last paragraph.



## Copy of the Charge and Specifications under which Dr. Richards was Convicted in 1856.

[In connection with the foregoing, was communicated to the Litchfield South Association a copy of the Charge and Specifications in the case of Common Fame vs. James Richards, issued by the Presbytery of New Orleans, January 1856, as follows:]

The Committee appointed by Presbytery to investigate the rumors affecting the standing and reputation of Dr. James Richards, beg leave respectfully to report;

That they find the rumor accusing Dr. James Richards of intoxication at various times, wide-spread and permanent, and they therefore recommend and consider it the duty of Presbytery to institute judicial process against him, on the charge of drunkenness brought against him by Common Fame, under the following specifications, to wit:

**FIRST.** That on a certain evening appointed for his second lecture to the young men of the Third Presbyterian Church, in the month of April or May, 1854, being shortly previous to his installation, Dr. Richards was evidently so much intoxicated as to be unable properly to conduct the exercises, and was obliged to discontinue them.

**SECOND.** That at a Wednesday evening Lecture to the Third Presbyterian Church, in the early part of July, 1854, he was so much intoxicated as to be unable to conduct the services without difficulty; and on the subsequent day was found at home under the influence of ardent spirits.

**THIRD.** That at a Wednesday evening Lecture to the Third Presbyterian Church, in the latter part of November, 1854, he was evidently intoxicated, and one or two days subsequently was found in a gross state of intoxication about the Post Office, and in the "Continental" coffee-house, [corner of Custom House Street and Exchange Alley,] hardly able to stand, and was taken home in that condition by J. J. Lugenbuhl.

**FOURTH.** That on Friday, Dec. 22d., 1854, being the day appointed for the Preparatory Lecture, Dr. Richards was quite intoxicated on the streets, in the neighborhood of the Post Office: drank a glass of liquor at the "Duty" coffee-house [corner of Bienville street and Exchange Alley,] appeared intoxicated in the Omnibus, and after his return home was prevented by friends from preaching that evening, lest he should betray his condition.

**FIFTH.** That on Wednesday, February 28th, 1855, at his residence at Capt. James Whann's house, Dr. Richards was under the influence of liquor during the middle and latter part of the day, the effects of which had not all disappeared at the time of lecture the same evening, in the Third Presbyterian Church.

**SIXTH.** That on Thursday, March 1, 1855, he was quite intoxicated, and gave evidence of it by violent manners and intemperate and inconsistent language, at Mr. Toy's office in Exchange Alley.

**SEVENTH.** That on Friday, March 2d, 1855, he was found unconscious, apparently from liquor, at 5 o'clock in the morning, by the Police, and taken to the watch-house; and being afterwards discharged by the Recorder, was seen much intoxicated at a coffee-house in St. Louis street; and was finally seen coming out of the Post Office still under the influence of liquor; and was taken home in a state of nervous excitement and physical exhaustion by Capt. James Whann.\*

Report adopted, and charge preferred.

The result of the trial was, that the general charge was sustained,—specifications 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, wholly, specifications 4 and 7, in part.

*Sentence,* deposition from the ministry and excommunication from the church.

Certified, H. M. SMITH, S. C., Presbytery of New Orleans.

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\* Notice the consecutive dates of the last three specifications, and compare the accounts given of the affair, above, p. 12, and Appendix, p. 5.

## CONFERENCE AND CORRESPONDENCE OF THE COMMITTEE WITH MEMBERS OF THE NORTHFIELD CHURCH.

[Before the result of the petition of Dr. Richards to the Presbytery of New Orleans was known, he had signified his intention of paying no respect to the anticipated adverse decision of that body. And after that decision was ascertained, his course was such as to make it probable to the members of the Litchfield South Association that they would be compelled to give public warning to the churches with regard to what they knew touching his standing and character. But they were unwilling to proceed to this painful duty, until they had used every other expedient. They felt especially that every effort ought to be made privately to disabuse the people at Northfield of the delusions which Dr. Richards had practised upon them.]

Accordingly, on the 28th of November, 1859, two members of the Committee of the Litchfield South Association having the matter in charge, held an interview, by previous appointment, with some half-dozen "who seemed to be pillars" in the Northfield church. The interview was chiefly occupied with reading the correspondence of the Committee of Inquiry, without comment or argument. The impression made by these documents seemed to be one of surprise and consternation. One or two present remarked, "It is perfectly overwhelming." Indeed the expressions of the Northfield brethren were such that the chairman of the Committee of the Association, then present, felt bound to caution them against judging Dr. Richards too hastily, and to suggest that the first question for them was *not* whether Dr. Richards was *guilty*, but whether the evidence to which they had listened afforded sufficient ground of *suspicion* to justify an investigation; and in answer to a request for advice, he pointed out the prescribed steps of Christian discipline. One of the church-members present, Deacon John Catlin, declared his intention of beginning the process of discipline without delay; and the Committee took their leave with strong hopes of a quiet end of the public scandal.

But, a few days after, one of the members of the Committee received from Deacon Catlin the following letter, written subsequently to an interview between the writer and Dr. Richards.]

**Dea. John Catlin to Rev. L. W. Bacon.**

*Northfield, Dec. 2, 1859.*

REV. L. W. BACON, Dear Sir:

At the close of our interview on Monday, I felt it to be a sad *reality* that we must part with Dr. Richards; and knowing as I did the strong hold he had gained on the affections of this people, the future looked ominous of evil, and only evil. I saw no ray of hope beaming upon our church; and I wished—yes, I *did* wish—that the Doctor had never entered our pulpit. But when I thought more leisurely of what we had heard, it seemed to me that those asserted *facts* should be received with some grains of allowance.

Why, here was a brother in our church accused of great moral delinquencies, both before and since his reception by us; the *latter* consisting principally in his denial of the *former* charges—charges with which, as affecting *present* character, we had nothing to do. I thought of the resolutions adopted *unanimously* by this church—and also by the society—on the 8th of November, (a copy of which I inclose herewith;) I thought of the full confidence of our people in the Doctor as a Christian minister; I thought of his apparently heartfelt devotion to the spiritual interests of this church and people; and then I said to myself "These things *cannot* all be so. There must be another side of the picture to be looked at before we pass sentence of condemnation. And unless this case be an exception to general rules, there must be some palliating circumstances, and many of these asserted *facts* will be found to have no foundation in truth." I admitted *fully* the sincerity of your belief, and the honesty of your intentions, yet I did think that you had taken a *one-sided* view, and I knew that you would utterly fail of convincing this people that brother Richards is not a Christian man, and one worthy to be our minister. I said "Mr. Bacon is young and inexperienced; Mr. Bacon is ardent and impulsive; and he will look back in coming years on the transactions of to-day with sorrow—with sorrow that he allowed himself to be made the tool of others in searching among the graves of the buried past, for the evidences of a brother's imperfections."

And now, my dear Sir, we know there are many things *said* against the Doctor; we know that *some*, and we believe that *many* of these reports are *untrue*. We have received him as a brother into communion and fellowship with us; and till his unworthiness is proved beyond a peradventure, it is, I believe, the unanimous disposition of this church and Society to give him their sympathy and support.

In conclusion, let me express the hope and the heartfelt prayer that the Association will allow us, *without further interruption*, to labor together for the upbuilding of Zion and the salvation of souls.

In gospel bonds, sincerely yours,

J. CATLIN.

RESOLUTIONS OF THE CHURCH IN NORTHFIELD, INCLOSED IN THE FOREGOING LETTER.

*Whereas*, The Rev. Dr. Richards, a brother beloved, and in good and regular standing in this church, has been thwarted in his efforts to obtain the removal of a *previously* existing censure; and

*Whereas*, This failure has been apparently the result of means and influences the most unjust and inimical; and

*Whereas*, He was received into this church only after the most searching and thorough examination of his grounds for Christian hope; and

*Whereas*, We have seen in his manner of life, in his walk and conversation, absolutely *nothing*, to censure or condemn:

Therefore be it by us, the Congregational Church in Northfield, and it is by us hereby

*Resolved*, That brother Richards has our *undiminished* confidence and esteem; and that *we hereby pledge to him whatever of sympathy, of encouragement and support* we, as a church are capable of bestowing.

And be it furthermore by us

*Resolved*, That in view of the course taken by ecclesiastical bodies and members thereof, we justly may and do rejoice that we have assumed the position of a *Free and Independent Church*.

*Resolved* finally, That believing as we do, that the *call* of a church constitutes the highest earthly authority for the exercise of ministerial functions, in and over that particular church, we do hereby express our desire that Dr. Richards should continue with us as our *Teacher*, our *Counselor* and *Guide*.

The above Preamble and Resolutions were adopted by the church and the Society *unanimously* in their meetings on the 8th of November, ultimo.

Answer.

Litchfield, Dec. 5th, 1859.

My dear Sir,

I was sincerely gratified to receive from a Northfield man a letter so perfectly courteous and Christian in its *terms*, as yours of the 2d inst., although I cannot agree with its *conclusions*. I do not know that it requires an answer, but I will remark upon a few points:

1. I do not take it hardly of you that you are not disposed to be governed in this matter by my opinion. I believe you are right in speaking of me as "young, ardent and impulsive." But my opinion in this matter is the opinion of *every member of the Association* so far as I have heard them express themselves; and not only so, but when I stated the case to the New Haven Central Association a few weeks since, the answer was unanimous as to the course which our Association ought to pursue. The singular and unaccountable mistake of several in your church seems to be in supposing that this business is some affair of *mine*. My brother Averill, or brethren McKinstry, Lyman, Vail, Murdock, &c., are neither "young" nor "impulsive."

2. I think you mistake in saying that the moral delinquencies charged upon Richards as committed since his reception by you "consist principally in his denial of the former charges." This is *one* only of some *nine* or *ten* specifications under the *single* charge of *lying*. Besides this charge there are charges of drunkenness, calumny, obtaining money under false pretenses, and breach of solemn covenant; all of which have taken place since his residence in Litchfield, and most of which since his reception into your church.

3. Is it not a grave mistake to say that with the former charges, "as affecting *present* character you have nothing to do?" With former sins *confessed and repented of*, you certainly would have no concern. But is it so with wilful and scandalous sins denied or justified? I put the question to your impartial common sense. There can be only one answer to it among unprejudiced persons.

4. After the first impression made upon your mind by the correspondence which we read to you, you thought 1st, of the resolutions of your church, 2nd, of the confidence of the Northfield people, 3rd, of Richards's apparent devotion, (three things by the way which seem to have no earthly bearing on the merits of the case) and "said to yourself" "there must be another side to be looked at before we pass sentence of condemnation." Just the thing, my dear brother, that I said to you before you had thought of all these things at all! You will remember that in answer to your question, I said that no man ought to be condemned without a hearing; but that the evidence which even to your mind was "overwhelming," and which has made the same impression on the mind of every person who has examined it, was a sufficient ground, not of "passing sentence," but of *instituting an examination*. There may be, as you say, palliating circumstances. It may be, by an imaginable possibility, that some of these "asserted facts" shall "be found to be without foundation," asserted though they are, some of them, on the testimony of several unimpeachable, disinterested, uncollusive witnesses, against the word of one impeached witness, and he the defendant himself, in a desperate emergency, testifying in his own behalf. Be it so. Can there be anything better for the calumniated man than to invite, persuade, or even *constrain* him to meet the charges and refute them? Would there be any inhumanity in suggesting to Dr. Richards, if his own delicacy did not demand it, to retire from public ministry until you had investigated these charges? Do you not believe that this course would bring forth his righteousness as the light, and his judgment as the noonday, both of which are under a cloud of suspicion?

5. You believe that I will one day be sorry "that I allowed myself to be made the tool of others in searching among the graves of the buried past for the evidences of a brother's imperfections." The word *tool*, implies generally, in such a use, that one has been deceived and beguiled into accomplishing the sinister ends of other parties. Now all *my* action in this matter was in fulfillment of a grave, public trust. The rest of the Association say that they act from the same considerations,—do you know that they do not? The vote under which the Committee were required to act was drawn by Dr. Richards's counsel, and urged on our adoption by him. And the whole inquiry was started by the petition of Dr. Richards. Of which of these parties was I the "tool?"

But again, I was not employed in searching, specifically, "for the evidences of a brother's imperfections." He had come to us requesting an examination of his case. Through his counsel he had requested the appointment of "a Committee to make such inquiries as will enable this Association to reach a just conclusion." (These are the words of the vote in Dr. Clarke's handwriting,) and the Association had done just that, no more. As Chairman of the Committee thus appointed, I did exactly what was required, no more, no less. Suppose the result had been (as I at one time most warmly hoped,) a file of letters in complete vindication of Dr. Richards; would not my course have been right? And since it turned out differently, was it any the less right?

6. In conclusion, you hope that the Association "will allow you *without further interruption* to labor together" with Dr. Richards, &c. Pray tell me what interruption the Association has *ever* practised on your affairs? No communication has ever been presented on the subject from the Association to the church. No opinion has ever been expressed by the Association as to the course of the church. Certainly no jurisdiction over the church has ever been claimed either by the

Association, or by any member of it. What possible fear can you have then of being "*interrupted*?"

The very hope which you express of not being interrupted, will show you one thing, if you will think upon it for a moment. And that is, that the church in Northfield is just as independent now as it was before their vote to withdraw from the Consociation, *and not one jot more*. Then, you were liable to an expression of public disapprobation from sister churches, and you are liable to that now. Then, if you had thought best to employ for your minister a man convicted and degraded for infamous crimes, that man would have been liable to public exposure and disgrace at the hands of the Association, and he cannot escape that now.

Two or three questions I beg you to ponder:

1. Is it not somewhat strange that in response to between thirty and forty letters sent out indiscriminately to those who have had opportunity of knowing Dr. Richards, including his own references, and those who, we were assured, were his friends, asking impartially for things in *confirmation* or *contradiction* of his self-defense, *ALL* who had anything to say, testified against him?

2. Is it not strange, if there was anything unjust or inquisitorial in our instituting the inquiry into Dr. Richards's character, that *ALL* the brethren of the Association should have conspired to commit the injustice?

3. If Dr. Richards had led a holy, temperate life at New Orleans; if he had been the victim simply of disease for two years, is it not strange that *ALL* the members of his Presbytery, including members of his own church, should unite in pronouncing him worthy not only of deposition but of *excommunication*? His defense was as good there as here; is it not strange that there was not *one* to protest, or even to dissent?

4. In the face of your urgent petitions and of his memorial, is it not strange that at the late meeting of the Presbytery of New Orleans there should have been *not one* to vote for Dr. R.'s restoration? and that (in the language of Dr. Palmer's letter,) there is a prevailing and (so far as he knows) a *universal* conviction that Dr. R. is wholly devoid of moral principle? Has he *no* friends there? no physician that knew his infirmity? no intimate that could protect his character?

5. Is it not strange that if so monstrous an outrage was committed by the Presbytery as to try a man without giving him a chance to be heard, Dr. Richards did not appeal to the Synod to have the sentence reversed? Is *all* the world, without any exception but the Northfield church and Dr. Cheever, engaged in a conspiracy against this innocent man?

6. If the action of the Association is arbitrary, and mischievous, and meddling, is it not strange that *not one* of the intelligent New Haven Association should see it and protest against it instead of *unanimously* approving the course that had been taken?

7. Is it not an easier way to account for all these facts, to suppose that Dr. Richards is a bad man, successfully assuming the behavior of a Christian?—that he *did* "lose all character for veracity at Aurora;" that he *was* guilty of dishonest and dishonorable conduct at Canandaigua; that he was guilty of intemperance at Morristown and New Orleans; that the Presbytery *was not* wholly corrupt and malicious; that here the Association have done their conscientious duty; that the witnesses who have spoken to us from Warren and New Preston, have told the truth; and that the united testimony of such men as Dr. Hickok, Dr. Magie, Mr. Cuyler, Dr. Ellsworth Daggett, Dr. Henry Mills, Dr. M. L. P. Thompson, uncontradicted by a single witness except Richards himself, is *not* false and malicious, but that Richards is, as they say he is, a man of notoriously corrupt character. This one supposition sustained by such a mass of evidence, simplifies and explains the whole mass of unaccountable facts.

I think I can promise the Northfield church that the Association will not *interrupt* them; and they will of course understand that *they* will not interrupt the Association. But if, with such evidence as we have before us, we proceed to the action which has been suggested, I feel sure that you, at least, will allow that we may be influenced by other than corrupt and malicious motives.

Pardon any rough expressions which I may have let fall in the haste and earnestness of writing, and believe me ever,

Respectfully and sincerely your friend, L. W. BACON.

## FINAL ACTION OF THE LITCHFIELD SOUTH ASSOCIATION.

At an adjourned meeting of the Litchfield South Association, at Washington, Dec. 6th., 1859, the following Resolutions were passed, *scm. con.*

*Whereas*, James Richards, a deposed and excommunicated minister of the Presbyterian church, has assumed the functions of a minister in regular standing; and in repeated instances has entered the pulpits of churches in this region through their ignorance of his real standing and character, and,

*Whereas*, On being warned by this Association of the consequences of such irregularities, said Richards petitioned this body to examine and inquire into his case with the view of recommending him to the churches as a candidate for the gospel ministry; which examination and inquiry having been instituted, revealed evidence convincing to us of his moral unfitness for the sacred office; and

*Whereas*, during the progress of the inquiry which he had requested, said Richards did, with the assent of this Association, withdraw his petition to this body for the purpose of presenting to the Presbytery of New Orleans which had deposed him, a prayer for restoration to the ministry, which prayer was refused by unanimous vote of said Presbytery, on the ground of the absence of any sufficient evidence of his repentance of the crimes for which he had been deposed and excommunicated; and

*Whereas*, said Richards refuses to respect the discipline of that body whose discipline he had solemnly covenanted and promised to obey, and continues to exercise the public functions of the ministry as he finds opportunity; therefore

*Resolved*, That it is the duty of this Association on occasion of the next act of public ministration of the said Richards, publicly to notify the churches with regard to his standing and character: and that we do once more entreat him to desist from his scandalous course.

*Resolved*, That the foregoing preamble and resolution be communicated to Dr. Richards by the Scribe of this body.

*Resolved*, That in case of any future act of public ministration by Dr. Richards, the following letter be published, over the signatures of the Moderator and Scribe, in *The Litchfield Enquirer, The Winsted Herald, The Religious Herald, The New York Observer, Evangelist and Independent, The Congregationalist, and The Boston Recorder.*

The Litchfield South Association of Pastors, to the churches within the bounds of the Association, send greeting.

FATHERS AND BRETHREN: From the first planting of these churches, the trust has been reposed in the hands of the Associated Pastors, of examining and recommending suitable candidates for the ministry, and of ascertaining the character and standing of ministers coming among us from abroad. As a good fruit of the mutual fidelity of the churches and the Association in this matter, we may reckon the succession of many generations of a ministry singularly honored for purity of life and doctrine.

We feel, therefore, that you might justly charge us with unfaithfulness in an important trust, if at any time we, having knowledge that any person among you was wearing without authority the character of a minister duly approved and recommended to the churches, should neglect to put you on your guard against imposture.

It has come to our knowledge that James Richards, D. D., now residing in Litchfield, has assumed the functions of a minister in regular standing, and in repeated instances has availed himself of opportunities of entering the pulpits of churches in this region, through their ignorance of his real standing and character.

We feel bound, therefore, to declare to you, and to all churches that walk with us in the ordinances of the gospel, that the said Richards has been deposed and excommunicated by unanimous vote of the Presbytery of New Orleans, for the crime of drunkenness, proved against him in divers specifications; that he has not been relieved of this censure, but that his late petition to be restored has been re-

fused by vote, also unanimous, of the same body; that he has never been received to our fellowship; but that, on the contrary, there has come before us, on the occasion of his application to us to be regularly licensed to preach the Gospel, convincing proof that he is utterly unworthy of the confidence of the churches and the fellowship of the ministry.

And inasmuch as the said Richards has endeavored to break the force of the censure which rests upon him, by calumnious aspersions against the body which deposed him, and by other false assertions, and lest any church should still be beguiled by such means into receiving him into their confidence, we add that we have conclusive evidence that he has been guilty of deliberate and aggravated falsehood in our presence; and that without exception, so far as our careful and impartial inquiries have extended, those who have known him best from the outset of his ministry—men of the highest standing in the church of Christ, and of the weightiest character for integrity and wisdom, and, withal, men who have no personal feeling but a friendly one toward Dr. Richards—solemnly declare that his character for truth and veracity is bad.

We have long forborne this public action, hoping to escape the painful necessity of it. But the contumacy of Dr. Richards in disobeying that discipline to which he had solemnly vowed and covenanted to submit, his evasion of trial by withdrawing successively from the jurisdiction of one body after another, before which the charges against him were about to be investigated, and his pertinacious attempts to impose on the confidence of the churches, notwithstanding our repeated remonstrances, leave no other course open for us to pursue.

In conclusion, brethren, we pray you to be vigilant against *any person* who, by seeking to evade the safeguards of the ministry, gives presumptive evidence of his unfitness for it; and always to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, "Beware of false prophets who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits."

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.

EPHRAIM LYMAN, Moderator.

GEO. J. HARRISON, Scribe.  
Washington, Ct., Dec. 6th, 1859.

[The foregoing Letter was published in the *Independent* of January 5th, and in the *Wanted Herald* of January 6th, 1860.]

# APPENDIX.

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## I. DR. RICHARDS'S DEFENSE.

### **Anonymous Article in the *Winsted Herald*, of Jan. 1860.**

[The following article is printed here as a characteristic specimen of the defenses that have been put forth in behalf of Dr. Richards. Other attempts of the sort have been more detailed and circumstantial in their misstatements; possibly some may have been more intemperate in their language; but this seems to contain, substantially, nearly all that has been said in behalf of Dr. Richards, and in defamation of the Christian ministry, of his former friends, and of his absent and injured wife.

The authorship of the article was for a time disputed by the friends of the writer, who declared that it was unjust to lay it to his charge. His name, however, has been disclosed, and his responsibility for the article is no longer denied. I was tempted, at first, to so much of retaliation as simply to expose the writer's name, here, in connection with his article. But the object of this pamphlet is not retaliation, but defense; and I am willing, instead, to say all that can be said in palliation of this article, and of a long course of similar unprovoked and unretaliated insult and injustice towards me which has followed it from the same source.

I do not suppose that the writer of it, when he volunteered the aid of his caustic pen to vilify the good name of a virtuous and inoffensive lady, a wife and a mother, in her remote absence, —was distinctly aware of the falsehood of his abominable accusations. I presume that he really thought that the word of a man who had just been advertised by responsible men as a common liar, was conclusive evidence against this lady's character; and that it was impossible for inquiry to go behind the pretended "original documents" which this man privately exhibits in his manly effort to blacken the character of the young woman whose affections he had won in her orphan girlhood, and whose conjugal love he had requited with drunken insult and intolerable cruelty. Neither do I think it just to the author of the following defense to suppose that in helping his friend to make for himself this miserable apology at the expense of his own wife's honor, he had any distinct consciousness that he was doing anything unworthy of a Christian gentleman. And as to his motives for meddling with the matter, I am sure that no person of charitable feelings will be disposed to question it. Considering the unpleasantness of the task which he undertook,—that of making an attack in a public newspaper on the character of an absent lady of whom he had no personal knowledge, and who certainly never had harmed him,—a task from which almost any gentleman might have been excused for shrinking—we can hardly suppose him to have been nerved to it by any lower motive than that of warm and disinterested friendship for Dr. Richards.

As to the remarkable accusation insinuated against me in the last paragraph of this article, I need hardly be careful to answer it. It is insinuated that as the nearest kinsman, in this community, and thus the natural protector, of an outraged and calumniated woman, I have vindicated her by exposing the vile and mendacious character of her slanderer. The charge is one to which I should be proud to confess. But it is not true. I was in the midst of the investigation which I had begun by the appointment of the Association and at the request of my colleagues, Rev. Messrs. Churchill and Lyman, when I discovered the distant relationship between myself and the late Mrs. Richards. This whole proceeding has been in the execution of public, not private justice.

L. W. B.]

*To the Editor of the Winsted Herald:*

SIR:—I have read with extreme amazement the manifesto published in your issue of last week, and purporting to come from a small, though doubtless a very



select, cluster of spirits calling themselves "The Litchfield South Association of Pastors." Had not the thing thus announced itself as the voice of Shepherds, I should have inevitably misderived it from a pack of wolves; hungry ones too. It is certainly a most extraordinary document—most extraordinary in every aspect of it; in the occasion which has called it forth, in the ingredients of which it is made up, and in the spirit which assorted and compounded them. It is as full of meanness as it can be, and it is perfectly steeped in malice;—thus much, to my sense, is evident on the face of it. It goes back into certain matters, which, I am sure, nothing but malice would care to remember, and which even any ordinary pitch of malice would not remember, without taking care to remember, at the same time, the extenuations that properly belong with them. Without the proof of my own eyes, I could not have believed the thing to be so bad as it is; had any man told me the simple truth respecting it, I should have smiled at his statement as a piece of distempered exaggeration. In short, I hold it to be, in the eye not only of Christian charity but of common humanity, a greater offense against both God and man, than the things it charges upon Dr. Richards, even granting these things to be true. Nor can I find any sort of excuse for it in the consideration, that the author probably disguises from himself, and perhaps thinks he is disguising from others, the real motives that prompted it. But surely, the thing is greatly overdone; in my judgment, this pastoral gun is far more dangerous at the breech than at the muzzle; I would much rather stand before it than behind it. I cannot think it will hurt Dr. Richards at all, either in the community where he lives, or in the church where he ministers; they can but regard it, at the best, as the work of one who reverses the precept;—"In malice be ye children, but in understanding be men."

However, I will not enlarge any further on the character of the document; as your excellent editorial of last week shows that you need no help in understanding and expounding it. I write to you mainly for the purpose of stating three or four facts, which I will do as briefly as I can.

First:—The Rev. Dr. Richards has now lived in Litchfield nearly four years, where his walk and conversation have been such as to win and retain for him, both as a Christian and a gentleman, the cordial respect and confidence of his neighbors, those who have lived nearest to him, and have known him longest and best. Of this fact I have personal knowledge.\*

Second:—Dr Richards is nowise subject to the discipline or jurisdiction of these "Pastors."† He is a member, "in good and regular standing," of the Congregational church in Northfield, where he labors as a Christian minister, and where, in accordance with the fundamental principles of Congregationalism, he has and holds his rights and powers of ministration from the people to whom he ministers. This fact, also, is known to me personally. So that these "Pastors," have no more business to censure or arraign *him*, than they have to censure or arraign the rector of St. Michael's church, Litchfield. In further proof of the point, I will add a report of the public action taken by the body in question, whereby, *as they had a perfect right to do*, they withdrew from "The Litchfield South Association," and became "strict" Congregationalists.

"Resolved:—That we, the Congregational church in Northfield, withdraw our connection from The Litchfield South Consociation, and we do hereby declare that from the date hereof our connection with said Consociation is dissolved.

"Resolved:—That the Clerk of said church, be directed to transmit an attested copy of the foregoing resolution to the Moderator and Scribe of said Consociation. "Northfield, June 20, 1859."

Third:—I have spoken of certain "extenuations" in reference to Dr. Richards. It is very well known, that at one period of his life he was visited with domestic affliction in its dreadfulest form. He was put to the alternative of obtaining, and he did obtain, a full and legal divorce from her who was then his wife, Mrs. Sarah Wisner Richards. The evidence whereon the divorce was ordered, involved the strongest scriptural grounds of divorce. This fact is known to me by personal

\* On this point see Appendix No. IV. "Dr. Richards's Plea of Irreproachable Character."

† See Appendix, No. V. "Jurisdiction of the Association."

inspection of original documents and authorities belonging to the case.\* Dr. Richards frankly owns,† like a whole-souled man as he is, and as deeply regrets, that under the pressure of this awful calamity he sought relief, as many others have done, in unsafe and improper remedies. Now, this habit, or rather these acts, (for they hardly seem to have ever amounted to a habit,) even if there were no such excuse for them, ought not to be remembered, after repentance and amendment: with such excuse, even if they were still unamended, human-hearted men would remember them with pity, not with reproach. But in this case the fault is *not* unamended: for the last four years, the man's life, so far as is known to those who have known him best, has been irreproachable in this regard. I say therefore, Mr. Editor, as you have suggested, that however certain sanctified clerics may view the matter, the world of men, aye, and of women too, will lose the mean temper of reproach in emotions of honest pity for what the man has been, and of generous respect for what he is.

The affliction to which I have referred, drove Dr. Richards, on several occasions, utterly beside himself: and who can wonder that it did so? An instance of this kind happened during his residence in New Orleans, and became publicly known there.

It was in the Spring of 1855. An editorial in the *New Orleans Crescent*, dated March 13, 1855, has the following in reference to it:‡

"We have it from authority in which we place every reliance, that Mr. Richards has been subject to mental depression, amounting at times to aberration: and that grievances of a domestic nature have had much to do with these aberrations. About two years since, he was discharged, cured, from an Insane Asylum in a Northern State; upon which he came to this city. No documents are necessary to prove that during his residence here his conduct has been moral and exemplary, as befitted a minister of the Gospel; and that, being a man of more than ordinary education and intellect, he has commanded the love and esteem of his own denomination, and the respect of all others. In regard to the occurrence of Friday week, we have the best authority for saying, that it was the result of a renewal of the domestic grievances which unsettled his mind at first; and that, in this last instance, the grievances were of the worst possible nature that could befall any man."

Fourth:—The wife of Dr. Richards, divorced as aforesaid, whose maiden name was Sarah Wisner, was a *niece* of the late Rev. B. B. Wisner, D. D., of Boston. Mrs. Sarah Wisner, widow of this Rev. Dr. Wisner, is own *aunt* of the Rev. Leonard W. Bacon of Litchfield: and is spending some part of this present Winter at the Litchfield home of her Rev. Nephew.

PAT.

January 9th, 1860.

## II. DR. RICHARDS AT NEW ORLEANS.

### ARTICLES FROM THE N. O. CRESCENT.

#### 1. Arrest of Dr. Richards for Drunkenness.

(From the *New Orleans Crescent*, March 3, 1855.)

**CURIOUS AFFAIR—A Minister on a Spree.**—Early yesterday morning a man was found lying insensible on the sidewalk in Old Levee street, in the Third District. He was carried to the guard-house and laid by the fire, and after lying there an hour or two, he got up and looked about him in a wild confused manner, and was

\* The assertion is utterly false. The divorce was granted *simply* on the ground of Mrs. Richards's refusal to live with her husband. This refusal was on the ground of his drunkenness and cruelty to her; on the ground of which facts, proved in a court of justice, she herself obtained a divorce from him. What "original documents and authorities" were exhibited to the unfortunate writer of the above letter, it is difficult to understand.

† This which Dr. Richards "frankly owned" to his friend, he *denied with an oath* in the presence of the Association.

‡ For the remainder of the article here quoted, and a complete exposure and retraction of it by the same editor, see below, pp. 4, 5, 6, 7,

certainly the wildest looking specimen of humanity that has been seen in the Old Third for some time. He was over six feet high, well-built and elegantly dressed: his long yellow hair was begrimed and so blowed, that it would have filled a half-bushel; his face, which is pallid and pock-marked, was covered with dirt and blood, as if from a violent fall, and his shirt-bosom and vest were also very bloody. In reply to the inquiries of the officers, and of Recorder Seuzeneau, before whom he was taken, he stated that he was a minister of the Methodist persuasion, and that his name was James Richards; that he was subject to fits, and had spent two years in the New York Insane Asylum; that upon being discharged, cured, he came to this city, and supposed himself to be entirely well until he found himself in his present plight. He denied having been intoxicated, and asserted that he had fallen down in a fit, though he could not tell what he had been doing in that part of the city, or how he came to be lying in the street at such an hour. Letters in his pockets corroborated his account of himself, the superscription being "Rev. James Richards, D. D." It was evident that he had not been in bad company, for neither his gold watch, nor his pocket-book, containing \$64, had been disturbed. His language and manner betokened education, if not sanity, and the Recorder politely discharged him. The gentleman may have had a fit from other causes than drinking; but the officers say that if he was not drunk, and beastly drunk, when he was brought in, there was never a drunken man brought to the Third District jail; and this is emphatic language, which we are not able to doubt.

### 2. "Additional."

(From the *New Orleans Crescent*, March 5th, 1855.)

ADDITIONAL.—In justice to some of our Methodist friends, who feel somewhat annoyed that a minister of another denomination should get drunk, and then say he was a Methodist, we will add what we did not know on Friday, when we penned our account of the disaster to the Rev. Mr. Richards, in the Third District. That gentleman has been in this city for some time; is well known in religious circles as a divine of no ordinary ability, and is the regularly installed pastor of the Third Presbyterian Church in the Third District. We will add, that had we known the gentleman was pastor of any church in this city, we would in charity to the feelings of his congregation have suppressed his name; but since the fact is public, it may as well be properly stated. No one in Recorder Seuzeneau's court had ever seen or heard of the gentleman; our strictly secular occupation prevented our being any wiser, and so we published the circumstance without reflection or hesitation. The reverend gentleman *was* very drunk and *did* say he was a Methodist; though there is this much in his favor, that the Recorder thinks that when he was before him he had not got sufficiently sober to know the difference between "Methodist" and "Presbyterian," and said "Methodist" because it was the shortest. Seriously, Mr. Richard's "falling from grace" is a sad, strange piece of business, which we are willing to attribute to some slumbering infirmity of which his congregation and his sect in this city were ignorant.

### 3. Dr. Richards's Apology.

(From the *New Orleans Crescent*, March 13th, 1855.)\*

THE REV. MR. RICHARDS.—We are pleased in being able to state that there were palliating circumstances in connection with the unfortunate adventure of this gen-

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\* This article, cut from the newspaper, Dr. Richards has repeatedly exhibited, in a private way, to his friends and acquaintances, since he has lived in Litchfield. He laid it on the table of the Association at his examination, and an extract from it was published by that devoted friend who wrote the anonymous letter to the Editor of the *Winsted Herald*. The disgraceful particulars which had been published in the "Crescent" before this article appeared, and the terrible exposure and castigation which followed it, at the hands of the Editor of that journal (and which is copied below) were not known in this region until the publication of the article by Dr. Richards's self-sacrificing friend became the occasion of bringing them to light.

tleman, the particulars of which were published in the Crescent on the 3d and 5th of this month. The affair, of course, created surprise in all classes, and profound regret throughout our religious community; and if it can in any way be explained or justified, it is due to Mr. Richards' high reputation and the feelings of his friends that it should be done. We have been visited by numerous friends of the reverend gentleman, including not only members of his own, but ministers and members of other denominations, who, while expressing their just and natural mortification, have yet displayed a spirit of sympathy and forgiveness for him which we were not prepared to expect, and which we have beheld with pleasure. We have it from authority in which we place every reliance, that Mr. Richards has been subject to mental depression, amounting at times to aberration, and that grievances of a domestic nature have had much to do with these aberrations. About two years since, he was discharged, cured, from an Insane Asylum in a Northern State; upon which he came to this city. No documents are necessary to prove that during his residence here his conduct has been moral and exemplary as befitted a minister of the gospel, and that, being a man of more than ordinary education and intellect, he has commanded the love and esteem of his own denomination and the respect of all others. In regard to the occurrence of Friday week, we have the best authority for saying that it was the result of a renewal of the domestic grievances which unsettled his mind at first, and that, in this last instance, the grievances were of the worst possible nature that could befall any man. In the domestic relation, it must be recollected, ministers are the same as other men, with this difference, that they are apt to view the conjugal tie in a more exalted light than men in general, and that when this tie is violated, the crush of feeling—the sense of outraged honor and humbled pride—is far greater with them than it would be with most other men. It is therefore not to be wondered at that Mr. Richards, a gentleman of refined feeling, and a Doctor of Divinity, standing high in the religious world, should prove unequal to the discovery that the wife of his bosom—the being upon whom he had staked all his earthly happiness—was playing him false, acting recreant to the holiest of earthly vows. This was the cause of his first aberration. Upon his recovery, there was left to him the hope that his wife would reform, and thus keep the world in ignorance of her shame and his humiliation; and it was the final dissipation of this hope which unsettled his reason the last time—his unfaithful wife having recently descended to the lowest depths of degradation—sparing his love, trampling upon his honor, and subjecting the name of which he was so justly proud, to shame and degradation. The unhappy divine has recovered from this last blow, and is now sensible of his position before the community. He states that on the evening of this aberration, and for some days previous, his mind brooded over his dishonor with a morbidity which he had no power to avert. The last of his recollection of that evening is that he was sitting alone in his study revolving in his mind his unhappy situation, and becoming more and more depressed. He has no recollection of leaving his house, nor of anything that happened to him until he found himself partially restored to consciousness the next morning, in Recorder Seuzeneau's office. His religious friends place the fullest reliance in his statement, and we can therefore have no reason to doubt it; nor do we suppose that any of our readers can doubt it, when they imagine what their own feelings would be under similar circumstances.

#### **4. Final Exposure and Disgrace of Dr. Richards before the Public of New Orleans.**

*[From the New Orleans Crescent, May 17.]*

##### **A CLERICAL IMPOSTOR IN NEW ORLEANS.**

When, in March last, we published upon the authority of others an article in extenuation of the misfortune to the Rev. James Richards, pastor of the Third Presbyterian Church in the Third District, which misfortune consisted in his being found lying beastly drunk in Old Levee street, we deemed it no more than simple justice that Mrs. Richards should be made acquainted with the charges against her which we were induced to publish in that article. We accordingly transmitted to

her friends in Penn Yan, N. Y., all that we had published in reference to her husband and herself, with the intimation that if those charges were in the least unfounded, we would make all the reparation in our power.

This, as we have said, we did from a sense of justice, and not from any conviction or suspicion that we were publishing a falsehood to the world; had our knowledge of the truth of the charges been personal and irrefragable, we could have done no less than we did. Could we have entertained any conviction, however, that those charges were not true, not all the eloquence of the South, or the persuasions of a life-time, could have induced us to lend our columns to such a purpose. We have now to state that a refutation of the charges against Mrs. Richards has reached us. It is a refutation of such weight and authenticity as to satisfy us that the religious community of New Orleans, and ourselves through their instrumentality, have been imposed upon by as arrant a scoundrel as ever went unhung.

In making this unpleasant confession, we must be permitted to say a few words in defence of ourselves. We did not make that publication willingly, or under any impression that it was at all proper, though at the time we believed we were giving nothing but the truth. We made it under the pressure of the most urgent personal solicitation, repeated from day to day by gentlemen of the first standing in our city—occupying the highest positions in different religious denominations, as well as in commercial circles and in the community generally. They told us, with every seeming of heartfelt sincerity, that they knew Mr. Richards to be a wronged and deeply-injured man. They showed themselves to be in earnest, by leaving their names with us, at the service of any one who might call.

We recognised the men as thoroughly in earnest; and feeling satisfied that they would be as far from knowingly slandering an innocent woman as they would be from lending themselves to an untruth of any kind, we yielded to their solicitations. We were thus instrumental in most foully injuring one that we now believe to be an innocent and estimable lady, beyond what it will ever be in our power properly to atone for. We are satisfied that the gentlemen who led us into this predicament were entirely deceived by the saintly-looking sinner, as worthy people without number have been deceived by him in other communities. Tendering the injured wife and her friends our heartfelt apologies for the wrong we have done them, we now give the substance of the refutation.

We have received a letter from Mr. Henry A. Wisner, the brother of Mrs. Richards, at Penn Yan, Yates county, N. Y. It is couched in gentlemanly language, and gives, with every impress of truth and an abundance of reference, the history of Mr. Richards's frailties and of his wife's wrongs. It sets forth that ten or twelve years ago Mr. Richards preached in Penn Yan—was generally beloved and esteemed, (notwithstanding rumors which occasionally got out that he was secretly addicted to drinking, which rumors were hushed up as slanders,) and was at that time married to an estimable young lady of Canandaigua county. In a few years the wife sickened and died, and the rumors of intemperance, which again went forth, extended to the assertion that she died of a broken heart.

After a lapse of nearly two years, Mr. Richards again married: his second and present wife being Miss Wisner, the sister of Mr. Wisner who writes to us. This was about seven years ago. Immediately upon his marriage, Mr. Richards was called to the charge of the First Presbyterian Church, Morristown, N. J., where he was well-known and highly esteemed. Soon thereafter he became so submissive to the demon of drink, that, he acted the brute to his wife. She, like a true woman, kept her sufferings secret, until one day in a drunken fit he threatened to take her life. Being now alarmed, she informed her friends of her husband's brutality and of her unhappy situation.

Mr. R.'s congregation thereupon investigated the matter—found the wife's charges to be true—and smoothed the matter over by pronouncing him crazy. Crazy he undoubtedly was, to the extent of alcoholic craziness, but was none the less a brute on that account. He was sent to the New Jersey Insane Asylum, where he remained but six weeks. Upon being released, he was arraigned before the Presbytery of New Jersey, upon charges of "drunkenness, profane swearing, abuse of his wife, and licentiousness." He was defended by the plea of insanity, and the result of the investigation was (Mr. W. thinks) his suspension from the ministry for one year.

His wife stood patiently by him through all this. As soon as he was suspended, he left her and started for the South; upon which she went home to Penn Yan, followed by the sympathies and highest esteem of the citizens of Morristown. So much for the story of her having deserted him, or proven false to her honor and her marital obligation. She took with her her two children, and began earning for herself and them an honorable subsistence by teaching school. Recently, one of these children died, and still more recently she went to Michigan with her remaining child, where she now is, teaching school, esteemed and beloved by all her acquaintance, and probably in ignorance up to this time, of her husband's wretched conduct in New Orleans, and still more wretched and slanderous palliation of his shame.

How the people of New Orleans have been deceived by the clerical impostor, is a thing they must now know, and in sympathy to the denomination of which he was considered so bright an ornament, we withhold the reprobation against him which our present feelings would warrant.

Below will be found a certificate of Mrs. Richards's character, signed by the leading residents of Penn Yan. It is accompanied by the assurance of Mr. Wisner that if it be necessary he can procure similar certificates from every community in which his sister has resided. We give this certificate a place with pleasure, as the least reparation we can offer for the wrong to which we have been a party, and with the announcement that we dismiss Mr. Richards from our columns, as our citizens should dismiss his memory from their hearts, forever.

We published some weeks ago, the fact that the reverend gentleman had departed for Europe, "for the benefit of his health." We have now only to hope that he will continue his journey to Africa, and stay there.

*To the Editors of the New Orleans Crescent:*

Gents: Within a few days our attention has been called to an article which appeared in your paper of the 13th of March last, containing, doubtless, what you believed to be "palliating circumstances in connection with the unfortunate adventure of the Rev. James Richards," noticed by you in your paper of the 3d and 5th of the same month.

In that article you state, among other things, as *facts*, that the mental aberration of Mr. Richards was occasioned by his wife's "playing him false," and as having "descended to the lowest depths of degradation."

Now, gentlemen, we are persuaded it will give you pleasure to learn that this foul charge against this lady is *utterly false*. We have personally known her from her childhood. She is a member of a Christian church in this village, in good standing, and wherever known is admired and beloved.

The lady herself is now in Michigan, teaching—thus earning bread for herself and only surviving child; and without her knowledge we make this statement as an act of mere duty to a grossly-injured virtuous woman.

Chas. C. Sheppard,	N. Thompson,	S. H. Welles,
James D. Morgan,	W. M. Oliver,	A. Oliver,
S. O. Dunning,	John N. Rose,	C. G. Judd,
L. Sanderlin,	Jas. Taylor,	Leander Reddy,
J. V. Vanalen,	H. R. Miller,	C. B. Brace,
John L. Lewis, Jr.,	David B. Prosser,	Henry Rose.

*Penn Yan, Yates county, New York, May 3, 1855.*

## A Lady's Comments on Dr. Richards's Apology.

[The following pungent criticism on the defense which was set up in behalf of Dr. Richards at New Orleans, was written at the time, by the Editress of the *Yazoo Whig*, and published in that paper March 30th, 1860.]

### REV. DR. RICHARDS AND HIS LATE "ABERRATION."

In one of our letters from New Orleans, we mentioned a fact which was of public notoriety in the city at the time, that the gentleman above mentioned had been picked up intoxicated in a gutter at night and carried to the Recorder's office, where he was kept till next morning. Below we give an apologetic article from the *Crescent*, prefaced by our good friend, Rev. Mr. McInnis of the True Witness, with quite a severe commentary on the proneness of some people to carp at the weaknesses of the Ministers of God. We copy the articles because we wish to do full justice to all concerned, as we had mentioned the matter as above stated.

We have given the Rev. gentleman the full benefit of the *Crescent's* miserable defense and Mr. McInnis's endorsement of it, and now we are "called," we believe in our soul, more loudly than Mr. Richards was ever "called" to preach the gospel, to say a word in defense of the lady so foully traduced by her unfortunate (?) ex-husband. In the first place, then, we believe on evidence which it would not be proper for us to tell here, nor have we the space, that the charges made against that poor broken-hearted woman he once called wife, are *false*—false as perdition—false in conception as they are cowardly in utterance. We never saw Mr. Richards, we never saw Mrs. R., and never expect or desire to see either of them; but we have heard their history from those who know it, and to whom falsehood is a greater stranger by far than habitual drunkenness is to the "distinguished" subject of this article.

We are intimate with a lady who knows Mrs. R. well. She was the only child of a widow in the western part of New York, was beautiful and accomplished, and perhaps of tastes and habits not compatible with the severe duties and self-denials of a clergyman's wife. Mr. Richards knew this, and she knew it too, but it was a love match. After a while the lady went back to her mother with two children, stating that Mr. Richards's habits were such she could not live with him. He was tried before his Presbytery and cleared on his plea that his wife's conduct had run him crazy. Still, after he had tried to blast her character, he went back to her mother's, promised amendment, and begged her to come back and live with him. If his charges were true, this was manly to say the least of it. Up to this time he had supported her in view of her return, but he now cut off supplies, in hopes, as it was reported he said, of "starving her into measures." But she was inexorable. She took a subordinate situation in one of the public schools of her native village, and is there teaching, still earning bread for herself and her one child, for the poor pittance of three hundred dollars a year. She lost one sweet little girl a year ago, and is struggling now with her great bereavement and the hard labor she has to perform, to earn a living. We ask our female readers, who are wives and mothers, if her lot is not a hard one, without the eloquent voice of her recreant husband blasting her character among strangers?

We are not uncharitable to man or woman. We know the frailties of human nature, and therefore do not condemn Mr. Richards if his nervous temperament required stimulus and he overtasked it;—it is a great misfortune to be thus constituted. No doubt the possessor of such a nature must suffer more than any one else by it. But we do blame him for his sneaking unmanliness in trying to screen himself from public contempt behind his wife's garments. We wonder the editor of the *Crescent* lent his pen and his usually dignified columns to such a mere subterfuge. Mark, they don't deny the man got drunk, but he was led into the indiscretion by the foul conduct of his wife! If his wife had proved herself guilty of the crimes he imputed to her when she first left him, what reader of human nature believes he wouldn't have been glad that her conduct had thus vindicated him? We repeat it—these charges are as false as they are pitifully cowardly, and we earnestly hope for the honor and manliness of human nature, that if Mrs. R., has a male relative living, he will whip the "aberrated" lodger of the Recorder's office all over New

Orleans. It is a disgrace to the Church and the Ministry of God to harbor such "unfortunate great men" within its folds. If a man must get drunk every time he gets in trouble, let him seek some other profession than the ministry—if he tries to serve God in spite of his constitutional weakness, He is merciful and will no doubt accept the will for the deed, where the spirit is willing and the flesh is weak. We do not wish to be understood as a champion for Mrs. Richards. We only object to the Rev. gentleman and his editorial friends palliating and excusing his faults by traducing her. If all he says is true, it is no excuse for him and should not be counted such. But public sentiment is in her favor wherever both parties are known. She could not keep a situation in a school at the North if her character was not good. We shall make no remarks about the antecedents of the great "aberrated," for it is not our purpose to do anything but condemn, in the most emphatic manner we are capable of, this cowardly attack upon his wife. It is nothing but the changes rung on the old tune, (which, with all reverence for the sanctity of the subject, we think if Eve had had a big brother he ought to have kicked Adam all over Paradise for) "The woman beguiled me and I did eat."

We close with the sad reflection that many preach the gospel who have answered to somebody else's "call," and there will be a "woe" to them for preaching rather than for not preaching.

[Then follows the article from the *New Orleans Crescent*, given on pp. 4, 5, above.]

### III. DR. RICHARDS'S PLEA OF INSANITY.

At the late trial of Dr. Richards before a magistrate at Litchfield, on occasion of an assault and battery committed by him on the person of Francis Bacon, M. D., of New Haven, the defense of *Insanity* (which has been put forth in his behalf in previous difficulties) was set up, and in support of it, it was alleged that he had been an inmate of sundry Insane Asylums. The defense, however, failed of convincing the Court.

The occasions on which Dr. Richards has been confined in Insane Asylums, so far as they are known to me, are three.

1. At Trenton, N. J., in February 1850.
2. At Bloomingdale, N. Y., early in 1856.
3. At Canandaigua, N. Y., October 1860.

1. At *Trenton*, N. J. The circumstances in which Dr. Richards was taken to the Asylum at this place, are gathered from testimony taken under oath at his trial before the Presbytery of Elizabethtown. From this, it appears that his friends and the members of his church at Morristown were led to *hope* that he was insane, as the only way of saving his character. A certificate was obtained from his family physician that Dr. Richards was "*not himself* that day and the day before" [on both which days the same physician testified that Richards was intoxicated] and when this certificate was objected to by the physician of the Asylum, as not sufficient to justify him in receiving Dr. Richards as a patient, a certificate in the usual form was at length procured.

Dr. Richards was accompanied to the Asylum by Mr. Voorhees, an Elder in his church, and Henry C. Pitney, Esq., then a student of law in the office of Judge Whitehead. From the evidence of these witnesses we learn that on the way to the Asylum Dr. Richards said "Voorhees, this is all wrong," and begged not to be taken to the Asylum. When told that there was no other way of saving his character before the world, than upon the ground of insanity, Dr. Richards replied that they might do it as well by taking him to a water-cure; but at length consented to go. Mr. Pitney further testified that although Dr. Richards did not *say* what was the matter with him, yet he said "*they knew*," and "the whole gist of his conversation was that he had been on a spree." When shown a bottle of brandy, he said it was "all right; he would want some by and by." After he had reached the cars, on the way to Trenton, Dr. Richards said he "must have brandy to let himself down on; that he felt terribly; that he should have a terrible time in getting over it." Mr. Pitney proposed opium, two or three times: but Dr. Richards said "*brandy was the thing*." It was given to him, as he requested, and "the more



he drank the more rational he became. His nerves regained their natural equilibrium, and when we reached Elizabethtown, no one would have observed anything irrational in him, even to the time of reaching the Asylum."

No physician will be at a loss as to the nature and cause of the "insanity" attended by the symptoms above described.

Dr. Richards was admitted to the Asylum at Trenton, Feb. 16th, 1850, and discharged on the 12th of the following March. The following is the account of his symptoms while there, given on the highest authority: "he was at the time, [of his admission] and for a short period after, in a highly 'nervous' state, and at times low-spirited."

2. *At Bloomingdale.* The following account of Dr. Richards's case at the Bloomingdale Asylum is also given on the highest authority:—that Dr. Richards was received into that Institution as an *habitual inebriate*; and that during his stay there he showed *no symptoms of insanity* whatever.

3. *At Canandaigua.* The following are the leading facts with regard to the recent case at this place, according to the best information that I have been able to obtain.

Shortly after his arrival at the village, Dr. Richards was seen to pass up Main Street, and not long after was found lying in the street, supposed to be drunk. He was taken up by friends, and led into a private house and put to bed, but after a little while was transferred to the Insane Asylum, where he remained a day or two, when he returned to Litchfield. There has appeared no evidence that he was insane otherwise than from the effect of liquor.

Recent developments of character in Dr. Richards, make it unnecessary to present further proof under this head.

#### IV. DR. RICHARDS'S PLEA OF RECENT IRREPROACHABLE CHARACTER.

The allegation is made against the Litchfield South Association, that whereas Dr. Richards has of late years been living a blameless life, the Association have nevertheless sought out and published against him accusations for old matters that ought in charity to have been forgotten.

The answer is this:

1. The Association have *made no accusation* against him for *former* guilt. They published the fact of his *present* standing as a man deposed and excommunicated for drunkenness. They did not pronounce upon the justice or injustice of that excommunication, but they conceived that the churches into whose pulpits Dr. Richards was gaining admission through their ignorance of it, had a right to be informed of the *fact*.

2. The Association *did* accuse him of "*recent deliberate and aggravated falsehood*" in their presence."

The assertion that the walk and conversation of Dr. Richards in Litchfield, up to the time of the public action of the Association, had been such as to win and retain for him the cordial confidence and esteem of the community in general, is not true.

Recent manifestations of his real character make it unnecessary to speak further on this topic.

#### V. THE JURISDICTION OF THE ASSOCIATION.

Sensible people who may read the foregoing pages will wonder that any further "jurisdiction" should have been thought needful to justify the Association in their action, than the common right and duty of honest men to expose a mischievous impostor on the public. The argument that whereas one body, the Northfield church, had withdrawn from connection with another body, the Association, therefore a third party, the Association, had no right to expose the impostures of a fourth party, Dr. Richards, will be looked upon as amusing.

A person acquainted with the principles and usages of the New England Congregational Churches can hardly have any doubt whatever that the Association fulfilled only its proper and appointed duty in the case. But there is this to be said in apology for the author of the above Letter to the *Winsted Herald*, that he is a minister of another denomination: and that one who has so widely mistaken the proper sphere of his own duty and responsibility, may be cheerfully pardoned for not fully understanding the professional duties and responsibilities of other people.

The subject is one not in controversy among well informed people; but for the benefit of others, the following editorial comments on this identical case, from *The Independent* of Jan. —, 1860, are submitted as an exposition of Congregational order, with respect to the duty, not only of the Association, but of the church in Northfield.

"For our own part we have no hesitation in saying (what we might have had no occasion to say, if we had not been virtually appealed to by the communication which we this day publish\*) that, in our judgment, the Associated Pastors of Litchfield South have done in this case that which it was their duty to do. What was the case?

"There came among them, three or four years ago, a man whose name, when it was borne by his venerable father, was greatly honored in the churches of Connecticut, and was a synonym of saintly purity. His academic titles testified the estimation in which his talents and attainments had been held by the dispensers of such honors. He had been a minister of the Gospel, but had been deposed from the ministry, and excommunicated from the church for drunkenness by a unanimous sentence of the Presbytery in which he was a member. After a few months' residence in the district of Litchfield South, he began to 'assume the functions of a minister in regular standing,' and to avail himself of opportunities of entering the pulpits of churches that were ignorant of his real standing and character. It was time for the Associated Pastors of that district to interfere. It was their duty first to remonstrate with the offender, and then, if their remonstrance should be ineffectual, it would be their duty to warn the churches against him in any way which might seem likely to be effectual. What remonstrance they made to the offender we are not informed; but from the minutes of the New Orleans Presbytery we learn that by some means Dr. R. was induced to bring his case before the Association by making an 'application to be recognized and authorized by them as a Gospel minister.' What became of that application does not appear; but it does appear that after a 'committee of inquiry, appointed by said Association to investigate the truth of certain rumors affecting the Christian character of Dr. R.,' had reported, he himself, by his petition, strengthened with a memorial from the Northfield church, took the whole question of his restoration to good standing into the Presbytery of New Orleans, where it most properly belongs. The minutes of the Presbytery in relation to that petition and the accompanying memorial are before the reader. After what seems to have been a careful and protracted consideration, the Presbytery unanimously refused to remove the censure of deposition from the ministry and of excommunication. What next? Did the man thus doubly, and more than doubly, convicted of disgraceful immorality, cease to 'assume the functions of a minister in regular standing?' Not at all. We say plainly, that if the Associated Pastors of Litchfield South, through any timidity, or any false delicacy, or any amiable unwillingness to perform a painful duty, had failed to do just what they have done, they would have betrayed the trust committed to them as an Association by the universal usage of American Congregationalism; they would have given a virtual consent to the dishonor put upon their own sacred office and vocation; and upon them would have rested the responsibility of contributing to break down all the safeguards by which the Congregational churches, in all parts of our common country, protect themselves against impostors, pretending to be ministers of Christ.

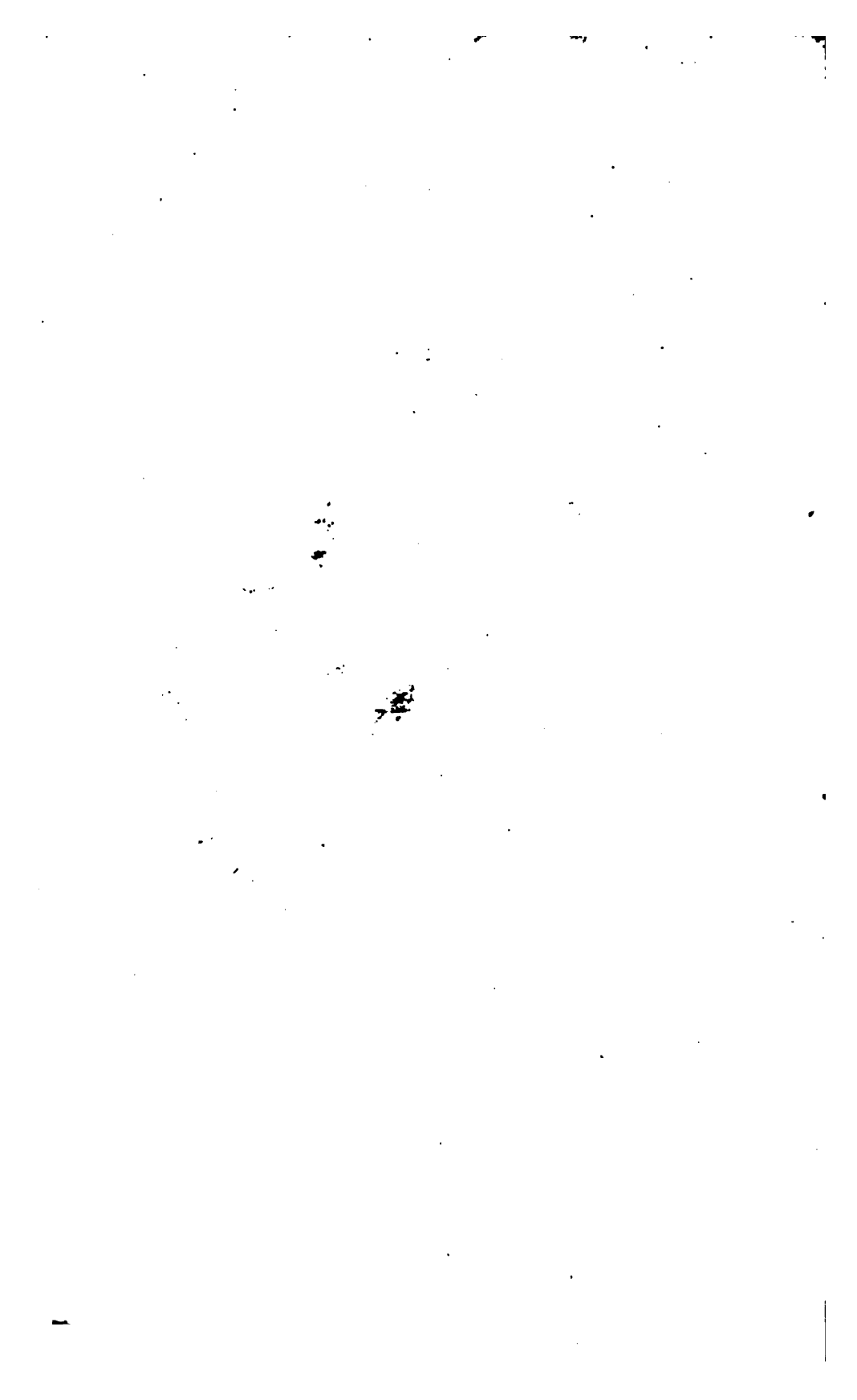
"We are equally free to say that the Northfield church have acted in this case most improperly and unwisely, and have done that which they will ultimately regret and be ashamed of. What have they done?

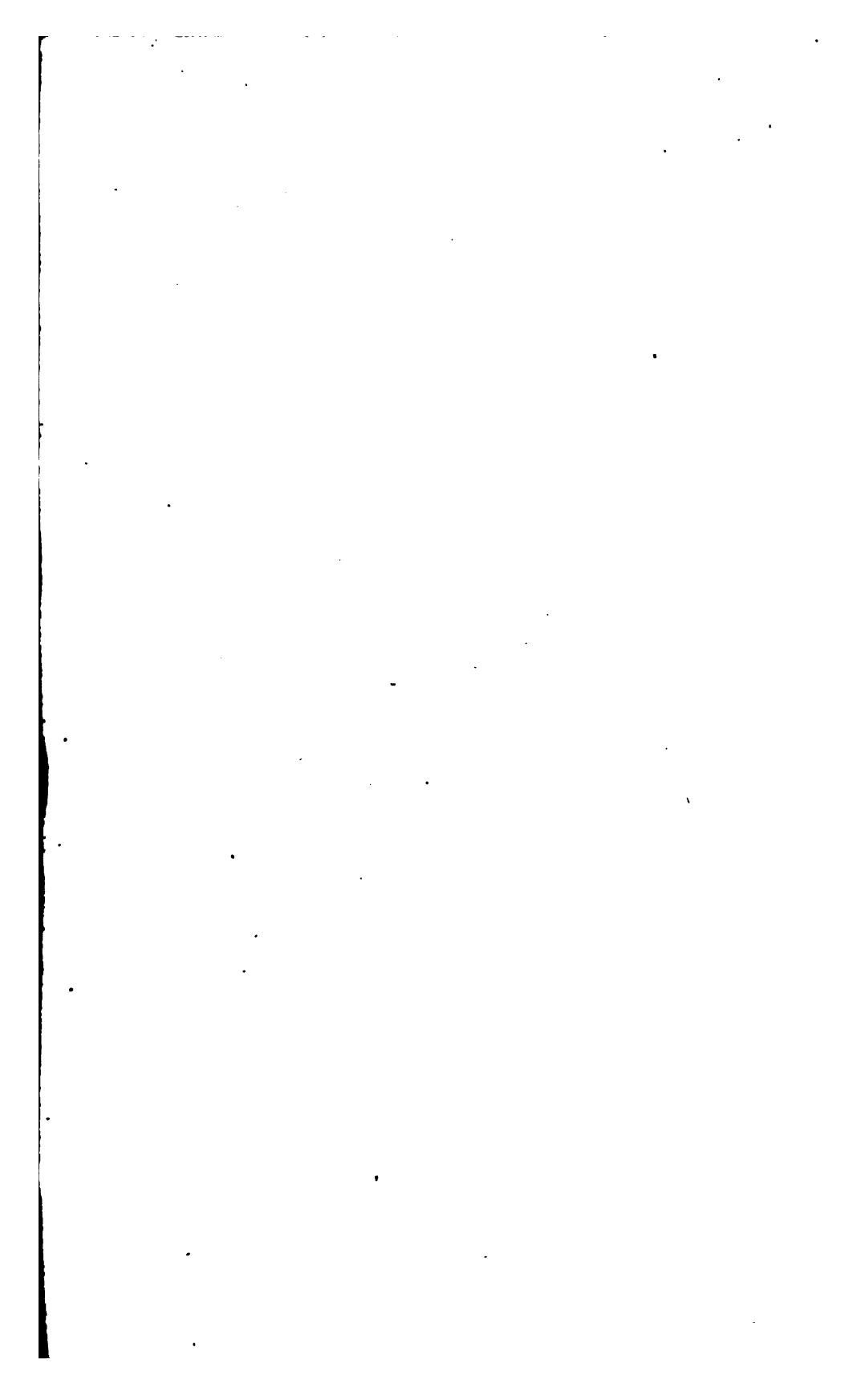
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\* From the church in Northfield.

"It is not in our power to go behind the record; but their own preamble and resolution, taken in connection with what comes to light in the minutes of the New Orleans Presbytery, tell a sad story. They say that Dr. R., a resident 'in the village of Litchfield' (some ten [*five*] miles from Northfield, if we mistake not) 'was received to membership' in their body 'by profession, after careful inquiry as to his standing and character, and a thorough examination of the grounds of his Christian hope.' How *carefully* they inquired as to his standing and character, and how *thoroughly* they examined the grounds of his Christian hope, before receiving him to their communion and making him their minister, does not very distinctly appear. Doubtless they think that they made the requisite investigation more carefully and more thoroughly than the committee of inquiry appointed by the Associate Pastors of that District—far more carefully and thoroughly than the Presbytery of New Orleans, either in the trial which preceded the censure, or in their recent reconsideration of the case at his petition for a removal of the censure. But other people will hardly think so without more explicit information. They say, that they 'by a unanimous vote employed the said Richards to exercise the functions of the Gospel ministry among' them, 'which he has done for the period of fourteen months;' and that all this is 'in accordance with the true principles of Congregationalism.' Doubtless they think that this is as they say. Doubtless they think that when they took off the sentence of excommunication from a man who had been regularly excommunicated, and when they made that man, by a unanimous vote, their minister—a man who not only was not a minister but had been solemnly deposed from the ministry by another Church—they committed no irregularity and violated no 'true principle of Congregationalism.' But other people are better informed. One of the 'true principles of Congregationalism'—and one than which no other is more essential to the system both as it is portrayed in theory and as it exists in fact—is the principle of the *communion of churches*. Every church has the power, under Christ, of admitting members and of excluding them. That is a true principle of Congregationalism, no doubt. But in so serious a matter as the overruling and nullifying of a solemn excommunication pronounced by another church, the 'true principle' of the communion of churches comes in play; and nothing is better settled than that the church which assumes to overrule and nullify an excommunication pronounced by another church, ought to act by the advice of a judicious council of churches. Every church has the power, under Christ, of electing and ordaining its own ministers. That is also, beyond all doubt, a true principle of Congregationalism. But the ordination of a minister in any church—the making that man a minister who before was not a minister—is a business which concerns other churches and especially the churches of the neighborhood. Therefore no truly Congregational church—no church which expects to maintain communion with its neighbor churches, and to walk orderly according to 'the true principles of Congregationalism'—proceeds to the solemnity of inducting any man into the work of the ministry without the advice of other churches represented in a council. How much more then are the "true principles of Congregationalism" violated, when a church, without the advice and co-operation of other churches represented in a council, takes upon itself the responsibility of introducing into the ministry one who not only was not a minister but had been regularly deposed from the ministry for disgraceful immorality! The Northfield church, by this proceeding, has put itself out of the pale of the communion of the neighbor churches. All the churches that have any knowledge of its ill-advised proceeding, are bound to testify against it by withdrawing from communion with it so long as it continues to walk in a course so disorderly and so subversive of all the rules and principles which make the intercommunion of churches, or the recognition of each other's administrations, safe.

"We observe a passage in the proceedings of the New Orleans Presbytery which seems to imply that Dr. Richards had obtained 'license' to preach from some quarter in conformity with Congregational 'usage.' We can make large allowance for their excusable ignorance of what is 'usage' among Congregationalists, but we regret that they have been so grossly imposed upon."







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